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LIFE OF LORD SIDMOUTH.

VOL. III.

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FROM A DRAWING BY CATTERSON SMITH, DRAWN ON STONE BY R. J. LANE A.R.A.

Sidmouth

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THE

LIFE

AND

CORRESPONDENCE

OF THE

RIGHT HON^BLE HENRY ADDINGTON,

FIRST VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH.

BY

THE HON^BLE GEORGE PELLEW, D.D.

DEAN OF NORWICH.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
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LIFE

OF

LORD SIDMOUTH.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1809, 1810.

Lord Sidmouth receives a last Letter and Visit from Mr. Windham. Death of that Statesman. Resignation and Death of the Duke of Portland. Mr. Perceval is charged with the Formation of an Administration. His Overture to Lords Grey and Grenville rejected. His Advances to Lord Sidmouth's Friends, through Lord Chatham, declined. He writes to Lord Sidmouth. Remarks. Messrs. Bathurst and Vansittart decline Office. A new Government formed. Position of Lord Sidmouth and his Friends. His Lordship's Interview with Lord Grenville, who declines to explain himself on the Catholic Question. Letters from Earl Powis and Lord Ellenborough. Lord Sidmouth's intended Line of Conduct. He recovers his Health — Dines with Mr. Wilberforce. Votes with the Government on Lord Grenville's Amendment — But with the Opposition on the Walcheren Question. Differs from Lord Grenville on the Subject of defending Portugal. Letter from the Duke of Wellington. Lord Sidmouth holds a Conversation with Mr. Perceval. His Speech on the State of the Finances.

SHORTLY after the prorogation of parliament, Lord Sidmouth received that visit from Mr. Windham, at

which the latter announced the change in his opinion respecting the expediency of the peace of Amiens, which has been mentioned in the last volume.* A portion of Mr. Windham's letter on that occasion has been already presented; and the remainder, which is chiefly remarkable as the last communication which his Lordship received from that high-minded statesman, will now be added:—

"Beaconsfield, July 20th, 1809.

"You see from whence I date, and will equally conceive the melancholy recollections which must mix with many satisfactions which I find here. * * * Of what prodigious use a mind of such power, a character of such energy, and a name of such authority as Burke's might be at present! I have been reading, within this day or two, the four orations of Demosthenes against Philip. It is curious to observe how very exact the application is to the circumstances of our times. There is a part of one of them—the third, I think—that might be translated almost word for word. Mrs. Clarke's letter you will have read with great delight. The value is inestimable, if it were only for the schism that it must make in that Church. The female saint must, I think, have the greatest share of the worship. She will certainly stand highest in the estimation of those who are only lookers on in the controversy. I do not know what will be settled by the synod whenever it may meet. I shall certainly be *avocato del diavolo* against the canonisation of St. Guyllin" (Colonel Wardle).†

* Vol. II. p. 52.

† It is believed that only one other meeting occurred between Lord Sidmouth and Mr. Windham, which the former thus described in a letter to Lord Buckinghamshire, dated October the 18th, 1809:—"Windham called here yesterday and sent in his name. I saw him, though in my nightcap. He sat an hour, and we talked over the present state of things pretty fully. On the

The close of this eventful summer was remarkable for those dissensions in the cabinet which led to a duel between two of its members, and the virtual dissolution of the Duke of Portland's feeble administration. This "strange political hurricane," as Lord Sidmouth termed it, occasioned his Lordship much anxiety, and involved him in a correspondence with numerous parties, which, though fraught with interest, is found too voluminous for insertion. The reader, therefore, it is hoped, will readily

Catholic question I spoke to him in the same strain as that in which I wrote to Lord Grenville. He was quite as reasonable as I should have expected; but I am still apprehensive that the weakness of the present government may encourage the two Lords G. to hold a high language on the subject. Windham seems to have no communication with Lord Grenville." Mr. Windham died on the 4th of June, in the following year (1810). Lord Sidmouth, who greatly admired his frank, honourable, and manly character, was deeply affected by his illness, the progress of which he described to his brother in several letters, from which a few passages are now selected. "*May 26th.*—Windham underwent an operation last week for the extraction of a large substance from his thigh. He seemed tolerably well for a few days, but yesterday there were apprehensions for his safety. The anxiety for him is general. Indeed, in most respects, 'quando ullum invenies parem.'" "*May 28th.*—I grieve to tell you that Windham is much worse. He went to the Charterhouse the day before he underwent the operation, and received the sacrament from the Master (Dr. Philip Fisher), from whom I had the information." "*June 2d.*—

'Fall'n is Glenartney's stateliest tree,
You ne'er will see Lord Ronald more.'

There is not a ray of hope. Yesterday Windham said that he considered himself as severed from the world, and to-day it is thought the scene will close. I have never observed a feeling at once so strong and universal as that which has been excited on this occasion."

accept in its place the following outline of the transactions described therein. On the resignation, early in September, of the Duke of Portland, which was followed almost immediately by his Grace's death, Mr. Perceval was charged with the reconstruction of the Ministry, an object which evidently could not be effected in a satisfactory manner from the fragments of the former cabinet. He, therefore, made overtures to Lords Grey and Grenville, "for forming an extended and combined administration," which, it is scarcely necessary to add, were immediately declined. "To such a proposition, indeed, as Lord Grenville observed when forwarding the correspondence on the subject to Lord Sidmouth, "the answer could not be difficult. The only point doubtful was whether it was worth coming to town for such a purpose." This Lord Grey decided in the negative, but Lord Grenville in the affirmative; the latter "being guided," he said, "by the resolution to give no pretence for imputing to him, however unjustly, any disrespect to the King's commands."* Disap-

* Lord Grenville, by expressing himself somewhat ambiguously in his second letter to Mr. Perceval, had exposed himself to the suspicion that he still entertained an idea of forcing the King's conscience respecting the Catholic question. "He objected," he said, "to the principle of the Duke of Portland's government, and the circumstances attending its formation." These words Mr. Perceval considered "could only apply to the measure which led to the dissolution of Lord Grenville's own administration," and he therefore inferred from them that his Lordship would act in a similar manner, should the opportunity recur. Lord Grenville, however, informed Lord Sidmouth on the 26th of October, that "he only meant in that letter to express his disapprobation of the sanction which he thought the Duke of Portland's government, as

pointed in this quarter, Mr. Perceval attempted, as most people thought he ought in the first instance to have done, to strengthen himself by a junction with the Addington party: but instead of making a direct application to Lord Sidmouth, he sent Lord Chatham to his Lordship on the 5th of October, "to intimate a wish, on the part of the King and Mr. Perceval, that they might all be brought together again," and to inform him that vacancies would be kept open for some of his friends in the House of Commons; but, strange to say, making no offer of office to Lord Sidmouth himself. To so shallow an attempt to detach the members of a party from its head, but one answer could be returned, and Lord Sidmouth accordingly replied that "under no possible circumstances could such a proposition be admissible." His Lordship, indeed, was so fully convinced that an efficient administration could not be constituted without the aid of that part of the Opposition which remained connected under Lords Grey and Grenville, that he would undoubtedly have received the overture in the same manner, though it had been presented to him in a less objectionable form. He still hoped that those noble Lords "were disposed and prepared to

the King's responsible ministers, had given to the demand of a pledge." This his Lordship further explained to Lord Sidmouth in his *resumé* of the 28th of October, as follows: — "My answer to you was, in substance, that I saw no ground to impute ambiguity to my second letter to Mr. Perceval; that the principle on which this government was formed, and to which I had originally objected, was that of giving effect to the demand of an unconstitutional pledge, and that by acceding to this government I must myself have become a party to that principle."

give satisfaction to the mind of the King respecting the Roman Catholic question; in which case they would receive his own support: if, however, from any motive they should decline to do this, it would then be his duty to assist in forming the best and strongest government of which the circumstances would admit. When sufficiently recovered from the serious attack of erysipelas under which he was then suffering, it was his intention to converse with Lord Grenville on the subject of the ambiguous expressions in his letter to Mr. Perceval; meanwhile, as the proposal for separating him from his friends could not under any circumstances be acceded to, there was no reason whatever for postponing any official arrangements for a single moment." Such was the substance of his Lordship's conversation with Lord Chatham on the 5th of October, and of two notes which he addressed to that noble Lord on the following day. On the 7th, Mr. Perceval himself addressed to Lord Sidmouth a long letter, which, as his Lordship stated in his reply, "removed the unfavourable impression previously made upon his mind by the proposition through Lord Chatham, by its frank and distinct explanation." In that letter, after requesting Lord Sidmouth's interference to induce Mr. Bathurst to accept the office of Secretary at War, with a seat in the cabinet, Mr. Perceval candidly assigned the "prejudices of some of the members of the old Pitt connexion upon the subject of Lord Sidmouth's immediately forming a part of the government, and the fear that they would by that circumstance be much alienated from the ministers, if not wholly decided in

favour of Mr. Canning, as the reason why he had not immediately sought his Lordship's own assistance in the cabinet."* Mr. Perceval added in a postscript,

* In a letter to Lord Sidmouth, dated October 14th, Lord Buckinghamshire made the following just remarks on this passage of Mr. Perceval's letter: — "Upon what ground could Mr. Perceval expect that you should consent to degrade and discredit yourself and friends for the purpose of upholding an administration, the existence of which he represents as depending upon the support of men not influenced by opinions connected with great points of national policy or constitutional doctrines, but merely by a feeling of personal pique and prejudice against you? and how could he suppose that, called upon under such circumstances, you could possibly be prevailed upon to sanction a sentiment of proscription so unprincipled? Has he ventured to tell the King the reason of his having shut the door of the cabinet against you, or brought under his Majesty's consideration that the person to whom he apprehends those old friends of Pitt may, from personal indisposition to you, be induced to attach themselves, had determined to join Lord Grenville's government, at the very time when you was withdrawing yourself from it, because you had resolved to support the King in the maintenance of those principles upon which the present administration is forming?" Several other correspondents shared in the anxiety here expressed by Lord Buckinghamshire, that the King should be made accurately acquainted with Lord Sidmouth's sentiments, as his Lordship was considered by many persons the party best suited to stand at the head of affairs at that conjuncture. Such an arrangement, however, was rendered difficult, if not impossible, by the influence possessed at court by the malecontents alluded to by Mr. Perceval, one of the chief of whom afterwards became, and remained until death, an attached and respected friend of Lord Sidmouth. It is singular that Mr. Pitt's friends should have entertained this fixed resentment against his Lordship, when there had existed no private enmity between the principals, and when one of the last things Mr. Pitt had ever said to Lord Sidmouth was, that he "had nothing to acknowledge at his hands but the most generous and honourable conduct." The following is the only remark which Lord Sidmouth permitted himself to make

that he "was also anxious to have, if possible, the benefit of Mr. Vansittart's assistance at the Treasury, and he therefore requested Lord Sidmouth's countenance to the application about to be made to him (Mr. Vansittart) through Mr. Herries, who was going to Torquay for that purpose."

This letter, as Lord Sidmouth afterwards observed to his brother, amounted "in substance only to this, — if you will persuade *your* friends to support me, I will endeavour to persuade *mine* to permit you to come into office some time or other." The overture, in truth, could only be regarded as an attempt to separate Lord Sidmouth from his friends, and in this light it was viewed by Mr. Bathurst and Mr. Vansittart, who both declined the offers made to them the moment they found that Lord Sidmouth himself was not to be comprehended in the arrangement. "The circumstances attending the proposal," as the latter observed to Lord Sidmouth, "were such as not to leave me a moment in doubt whether I ought to listen to it, and this immediate decision prevented me from allowing Herries to open himself on many points which he was desirous of explaining in the most unreserved manner, and which I should otherwise have been curious to hear." Mr. Vansittart proceeded to state, that "in consequence of Perceval's request that he would not disclose the particulars of his offer for some time, he was precluded from mentioning more

respecting this extraordinary proscription: — "Mr. Perceval ought to feel, for he must know, that *these prejudices of his friends have not been excited by my conduct, but by a consciousness of their own.*"

at present than that it was of a very distinguished and flattering kind:" it appears, indeed, from a note which Lord Sidmouth appended many years afterwards to one of the letters which he wrote at this conjuncture, that it was the same office which Mr. Vansittart afterwards so ably filled, the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

Lord Sidmouth, in his reply to Mr. Perceval, expressed himself highly gratified by the openness and candour of his letter, which he had immediately forwarded to Mr. Bathurst, though it was impossible for him to make any attempt to give effect to the purpose of it. He was convinced, however, that under no possible circumstances would Mr. Bathurst accede to such a proposition.* With respect to the proposal to Mr. Vansittart, his Lordship desired "to leave it entirely to his own decision."

After the failure of these two attempts to form an administration on an extended basis, Mr. Perceval proceeded to construct a government from the old materials, the only addition being the important one of Lord Wellesley, who returned from his mission to Spain to receive the seals of the Foreign Department.

* The following was Mr. Bathurst's answer which he addressed to Lord Sidmouth:—"I did not think that after the overture to the two Lords they would have ventured to apply to you; still less that they would have done it in a way so wholly exceptionable. You may be sure I go with you in every thing you have said or written on the subject, and I am glad to be saved the necessity of saying the same thing less effectively. Perceval's letter is very frank and ingenuous, for I believe it perfectly sincere, but that makes no difference in the substance."

Lord Sidmouth and his friends were now placed in an "unsatisfactory and embarrassing position." Believing "that the government was so intrinsically weak, and so crippled and broken down by defection, disaster, and its recent advance to its adversaries, as to be incapable of beneficial re-construction," they considered that the accession of Lords Grey and Grenville and their party to office "was essential to the formation of a ministry suited to the present exigency." If, however, such an arrangement could not be effected without a repetition of the attempt which occasioned the change of government in 1807, they were resolved not to remain inactive spectators of a measure which they believed to be "equally adverse to the best interests of the state and to the feelings of the King." * It was essential, therefore, that they should know what were Lord Grenville's sentiments and intentions with regard to the Catholic question, as this was the pivot upon which their line of conduct must eventually turn. In the hope, therefore, of satisfying his mind on the subject, Lord Sidmouth, immediately on his recovery, sought and obtained an interview with Lord Grenville at Dropmore, the particulars of which he described to Lord Buckinghamshire by letter on the 26th of October. Lord Grenville received him with great cordiality, but "said he could give no explanation respecting his intentions on the Catholic question; and that, on discussions arising, opportunities would be afforded of considering how far it might, or might not, be practicable to recon-

* Letter of Lord Sidmouth to Lord Chatham.

cile his own sense, and that of his friends, of what was due to the public and to themselves, with an attention to the wishes and feelings of the King." Disappointed at this reply, Lord Sidmouth, on his return to Richmond Park, requested from Lord Grenville a *resumé* of what had passed between them, in the hope that it might contain some further explanation; but as the answer on the principal point was again unsatisfactory *, Lord Sidmouth and his friends still remained in doubt as to the course they ought to pursue. His Lordship believed that Lord Grenville at that time had no intention of again agitating the Catholic question; but he feared the effect which a triumph over the government, in parliament, might produce upon those with and for whom Lord Grenville acted; and this apprehension he confided to Mr. Bathurst, on the 27th of October, in the following words: — "Whatever may be his present intentions, they may undergo some change from success, which, as it would raise the hopes of the Catholics, would render forbearance on his part more difficult. And how can we, on the one hand, assist in obtaining a victory which may lead to such consequences; or, on the other, contribute to uphold an administration which we know to be unfit for the crisis?"

* In this letter, which was dated October 28th, Lord Grenville expressed the following opinion on what had passed between Lord Sidmouth and Mr. Perceval: — "I beg you to be persuaded that your communication to me could leave but one impression on my mind — that of astonishment at the nature and purport of the overture made to you, and of the propriety and temper with which you had conducted yourself in consequence."

Lord Grenville was now a candidate for the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford, vacated by the death of the Duke of Portland. This circumstance afforded Lord Sidmouth another opportunity, when conveying a message from the Bishop of Gloucester, of introducing this important topic, when Lord Grenville's reply, though still silent on the principal point, was more explicit than on any former occasion: —

"The grounds," his Lordship observed, "of the opinions I have entertained as to the best mode of conciliating the great mass of the population of Ireland *, are certainly too long to be discussed in this letter; nor have I ever denied that this was a point on which the best and wisest men might differ from each other. But I have never looked at this subject in any other view than as a part of an extensive system, *in which, as you well know, has always been included, in my view of it, the most ample provision that the heads of the Church could themselves devise for the security of the Establishment both in Church and State.* With respect to any engagement to be now taken as to my future possible conduct in this respect, the Bishop of Gloucester has, I am sure, too just and honourable a mind not to see that a pledge which I declined giving to the highest authority, and for purposes for which no man could be more anxious than myself, cannot now be given for personal objects."

Lord Sidmouth and his friends regarded this answer as Lord Grenville's ultimatum. Here, therefore, the

* On this allusion to Ireland, the Bishop of Gloucester remarked —"Why will Lord Grenville risk the peace of *thirteen* millions to gratify the inordinate demands of *four?* I take him even on his own grounds of reasoning." Mr. Vansittart observed of the letter that it was gentlemanlike, but a little sophistical in confounding a pledge or promise not to act in a particular manner, under any possible circumstances, with a simple exposition of his intentions according to his present judgment of probable events. "Lord G.," he added, "speaks of the most ample provision for the security of the Church. I have often heard he had such a system in view, but never could learn what it was."

interest of this protracted negotiation terminates; but the correspondence was continued to a later period, and comprehends many interesting letters which cannot be put aside without feelings of regret. As a specimen of their general character, the following is presented. It has been selected from the mass, not only for the purpose of introducing to the reader one of those friends whom Lord Sidmouth most highly valued, and who were the longest spared to him; but also because it touches, as is thought very happily, upon all the leading points of the complicated transaction to which it relates:—

"My dear Lord, Ludlow, Nov. 25th, 1809.

"I have been extremely obliged to you for the communication of the papers you have intrusted to my perusal and that of my son *, who desires me to express how gratefully he feels the confidence which has been extended to him. He has, equally with me, regretted that his friend Perceval has not taken what has appeared to us to be the most natural and obvious means of strengthening the cause he has engaged in, by at least attempting, in a manner practicable and consistent with common sense, to obtain assistance so essential to his success as that of your Lordship and your friends. He was perfectly satisfied with the sentiments expressed by me in my conversation in Downing Street, which I find Mr. Keene has correctly related to your Lordship, as well as with my having declined for him the acceptance of office, under the circumstances in which the administration was forming, and with the manner in which I did it. I last night received the information of Lord Wellesley's having accepted the situation of Foreign Secretary. This acquisition will, unquestionably, greatly conduce to the reputation and efficiency of the cabinet, but will effect little in the House of Commons; and, I own, I shall be most anxious to learn, after Lord Wellesley's arrival, whether his penetrating and vigorous mind will not

* The present Earl Powis.

see and urge the necessity of passing over those obstacles of prejudice which have been so strangely permitted to prevent an arrangement—demanded, I think, by the state into which the country had been thrown by the extraordinary events which broke up the late administration—rather than expose himself to the little enviable situation of appearing the minister of a day. * * * I am obliged to your Lordship for the information respecting the invitation for your becoming a candidate for the academic honours of Oxford: your Lordship, if I may permit myself an opinion, acted most wisely in declining: such honours are not desirable unless conferred with unanimity. * * * Your Lordship's interview with Lord Grenville not having produced the explanation you wished, I cannot think Lord Grenville's return to power a desirable event: if it was attainable, I would wish to see a firm and steady government; but with the Catholic question in the back-ground, and *in terrorem* over the conscientious feeling of the King on that subject, the foundation of a government with Lord Grenville at its head would be sapped, by anticipation, before it commenced; and would, as others which have not obtained his Majesty's confidence, be upset the first favourable opportunity. I therefore hope that the ungracious manner in which your Lordship has been treated, and which fortunately has made more impression on the minds of your friends than on your own, will not have closed the door to your participating in the councils of the country, should the accession of our friend Lord Wellesley's abilities to the cabinet produce a juster sense of the importance of your assistance, and of what is due to your situation in life, and to the character and sentiments of friends such as Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Bathurst. * * * I remain always, with great truth, my dear Lord, your faithful and obliged

"POWIS."

Although these transactions produced no immediate result beyond proving the "firmness and fidelity of all Lord Sidmouth's friends," and adding force to the assaults of his vindictive "persecutor, St. Anthony,

whose scorching hand was constantly upon him" throughout the autumn, still they contributed to rescue him at length from that neutral position on the political stage so foreign to his disposition, into which he had been involuntarily thrown by the coalition and cabals formed against his government in 1804. Considering that the Duke of Portland's administration had been wholly incompetent to the awful crisis then subsisting, and that the introduction of Lord Grenville and his friends into the cabinet was essential to the satisfactory government of the country, he had co-operated with his Lordship on some of the disputed questions of the last two years. But as his principles of loyalty did not admit of his ever engaging in any organized system of opposition, he had at the same time given an honest support to all measures of government of which he could conscientiously approve. He had also carefully avoided any fixed or regular connexion with the Opposition, and had even taken the precaution, at his recent interview with Lord Grenville, to guard against its being "considered that such communication was any departure whatever from his determination to keep his public conduct perfectly free and unfettered." In the exercise, therefore, of the liberty which he had thus reserved, and differing entirely from Lord Grenville as to the propriety, under any probable circumstances, of conceding the Roman Catholic claims, he could not but regard that noble Lord's refusal to afford any satisfaction respecting his intentions on that subject, as detracting greatly from the preference to which he would otherwise be entitled, in the choice of a prime minister for the country.

On the other hand, as Mr. Perceval observed in his letter, Lord Sidmouth could not but approve of the principles of the present government, and desire its success; and the high opinion he entertained of Mr. Perceval's integrity and candour fortunately induced him to regard with less displeasure than his friends did the offence implied in the offers made to *them*, and in the ungenerous and vindictive reasons assigned for *his own* exclusion from office. His principal objection also to the government, as before constituted, namely, its incapacity, had now been greatly diminished by the accession of his old friend Lord Wellesley, whose talents, energy, and statesmanlike qualities, were likely, he trusted, to invigorate the whole cabinet.

Whilst his inclinations were thus gradually bending towards the existing government, he expressed the feelings which were working in his mind in the following letter to Mr. Bathurst:—

"My dear Charles, Dec. 1st, 1809.

"For the purpose of obtaining the only proper guide to my conduct in the ensuing session, I have asked myself this question: If a new administration were to be formed, would it be most for the public good that it should be composed of the persons of whom the present (of course including Lord Wellesley) consists, or of Lords Grey and Grenville and their mutual friends? I should *now* have great difficulty in answering this question (Lord Henry Petty being no longer in the House of Commons), even if the Lords Grey and Grenville should be disposed to be reasonable on the Catholic question; but my difficulty is diminished, to say the least, by Lord Grenville's continued reserve on that point, and is done away when I add to these circumstances the consideration that one of the parties is actually in possession; and, therefore, with a view to the other alternative, the violent and generally mischievous process must be resorted to, of over-

turning the existing government. I am accordingly convinced that our *bias* should be to support the measures of the present administration, which cannot now be considered so weak as to justify our concurring on that ground only, and before they are tried, in any parliamentary proceeding for their removal. The language I should recommend would be, that we were not hostile to government, and that our conduct would depend upon their measures, which we hoped would be such as to enable us to support them. I need not tell you that what has passed respecting myself will have no influence on my conduct, and that I wish it to have none on that of my friends."

Two days earlier he had expressed himself in corresponding terms to Earl Powis:—"My earnest desire," he observed, "was, and is, to see a government established at once acceptable to the King, and strong enough for the times; and no personal consideration whatever has been mixed with my anxiety on this subject. My public conduct will be solely influenced by the measures of government, and I sincerely hope they may be such as will enable me to give them any support."

On the 14th of December Lord Grenville was elected Chancellor of Oxford, by a majority of sixteen. "Thinking, as I do," Lord Sidmouth had observed to his brother, "on the Catholic question, I shall take no part in the contest, and have recommended abstinence to my friends." This was practised by several; but some of them, as intimated by Lord Powis, manifested an anxiety to invite Lord Sidmouth himself to become a candidate. On this subject, when writing to his brother, he expressed himself as follows:—"I have had some very gratifying offers of support for the chancellorship at Oxford, but I have long

given up all thoughts of such a nature, no distinctions unconnected with real usefulness having any attraction for me."

At the close of the year his Lordship experienced the total and permanent removal of his protracted disorder of erysipelas. He had latterly taken the advice of Sir Lucas Pepys, who adopted a bracing mode of treatment, telling him that "the course he was pursuing would have made him an invalid for life." One of the first uses of his liberty was to accept an invitation from Mr. Wilberforce to dine and sleep at his house. But little communication had taken place between these early friends for a considerable period. The gratification derived from this meeting appears to have been mutual; for, as Lord Sidmouth informed Mr. Bathurst, they "conversed on public subjects, with little deviation or interruption, from four o'clock on that day till long after midnight, and for near three hours the next morning. Wilberforce's view," his Lordship added, "of the actual danger of the country, is more unfavourable than mine; but in all other material points we entirely agree. He spoke with indignation of the supposed influence of Lord ———, which he had heard of in the summer, as directed against me, and said that if it should be discussed in parliament, he should mark his reprobation of such an abuse of parliamentary influence, as justifying much of what had been said of a reform in parliament. He has a great personal regard for Perceval, and a high opinion of the principles and character of Lord Grey, and of the official rather than the political talents of Lord Grenville. All that passed upon the resignation of the Duke of Portland, and the over-

tures and appointments which followed, he strongly condemned. * * * Of the two expeditions to Spain and Walcheren he has the worst opinion. On the subjects of peace, of internal defence, of finance, and the mode of carrying on the war in future, we thought exactly alike. All this was to me very satisfactory." *

The record of the year will be closed with the following extract from a letter, which is presented to the reader for the same reason which Lord Sidmouth assigned for sending it to Mr. Bathurst — "because it is so characteristic and so Johnsonian:"—

"My dear Lord, St. James's Square, Dec. 17th, 1809.

"* * * I hear that the Chancellor and his friends are much mortified with their defeat at Oxford. It was an event which they did not expect, nor, I own, did I. I have had a sittings of very great fatigue. I came home on Monday, at half-past eleven, from Wardle's cause, of which you will have seen some accounts in the papers. I dined alone, hastily and hungrily, and went to bed soon afterwards. In the morning I was very sick and unwell; so much so that, on my arrival at Guildhall, it was pressed upon me by several of the Bar to adjourn the Court. I, however, went on. I am now greatly better, but not yet restored. The fatigues of great attention and exertion, and alternate inanition and repletion, are too much for me. The dissolution of all order, and the

* Mr. Bathurst observed in his reply — "Your account of your interview with Wilberforce was very interesting, as well as characteristic of his ardent mind. I remember, some years ago, when he was half inclined to vote the House of Lords useless because they opposed his favourite project, and he would now favour a reform in parliament because one peer exerts the influence there which he has long been known to possess, in opposing your admission into the cabinet. I am very glad, too, that he sees your line of conduct in the same light that we do."

extreme imbecility of government, require a degree of energy in my situation to which my spirit is more equal than I find my body to be. I will, however, willingly exhaust both in the conflicts to which my duty may expose me. But enough of what relates to myself. I long very much to hear that your Lordship is at peace with that vexatious saint, St. Anthony. * * * I remain, ever most faithfully yours,

"ELLENBOROUGH."

Lord Sidmouth's health was now permanently re-established. This enabled him to take a more active part in the political proceedings of that eventful period; and, accordingly, we find him corresponding with Lord Grenville, on the 22d of January, on the terms of a proposed amendment to the address which the latter had forwarded to him on the 18th for consideration. Lord Sidmouth observed on that occasion, that he "entirely concurred in the opinion, that an inquiry into the failures of the late campaign was necessary, and that if an intention to that effect should not be distinctly stated in the address, it ought to be expressed in an amendment. He was anxious, however, that the amendment should be so worded as not to appear to prejudge the questions to which the inquiry would apply." Lord Grenville replied to the effect, that the terms of the amendment could undergo no modification, as many friends in the House of Commons felt very warmly on the subject. When, therefore, parliament met, on the 23d of January, and Lord Grenville in the Upper, and Lord Gower in the Lower House, moved amendments, expressing "the utmost indignation at the recent disasters," and describing the glorious exploits of Lord Wellington at Oporto and Talavera, as "marked only by a repetition of former errors," Lord Sidmouth in

the Lords, and Mr. Bathurst in the Commons, declared their disapprobation of such sentiments. "He could not but acknowledge," his Lordship observed, "that there was much to regret — perhaps much to reprehend — in the late proceedings, especially in the expedition to Walcheren; but a regard to justice and moderation would dissuade him from acceding to the amendment as it now stood. In a motion for inquiry it was unfair to anticipate the result. He desired a full and searching investigation, but he was not for prejudging the conduct of his Majesty's government." For these reasons Lord Sidmouth and his friends voted with the majority, against the amendment, although they approved of its main features; and the division proved, in consequence, much more favourable for ministers than it would have been had the Opposition pursued a more temperate course.* As his Lordship informed his brother on the following day, "had the amendment been worded with judgment and fairness, Opposition would have divided more than 100, instead of 92, in the House of Lords, and government would not have had even a majority of 50 in the House of Commons. I think the line we took is felt to have been creditable: I am sure it was the proper one." The correctness of this opinion was proved two days afterwards, when Lord Porchester's motion for "a committee to inquire into the policy and conduct of the late expedition to the Scheldt" was carried, in the House of Commons, by a majority, which included Lord Sidmouth's friends, of 195 over 186. On that occasion Mr. Bathurst, in an able

* Majority in favour of the address, 52 in the Lords, 96 in the Commons.

speech, justified the vote he had given in favour of the address on the first day of the session, and proved its consistency with the one he was now about to record. "He had voted," he said, "for the address, but not against inquiry, and he opposed the amendment because it not only courted inquiry, but anticipated the result." This debate Lord Sidmouth mentioned to his brother, who was detained in the country by indisposition, in the following terms:—"Bathurst acquitted himself admirably on Friday night. The division, it is thought, must lead to consequences affecting the existence, or at least the present composition, of the government. Of its insufficiency, the opinion is universal."

Only a brief period elapsed after his Lordship thus expressed his disapprobation of government with regard to the calamitous expedition to Walcheren, before another question arose respecting the defence of Portugal, which obliged his Lordship to manifest his independence also of the Opposition. The King had sent a message to parliament recommending the extension of "pecuniary assistance to Portugal in support of the military exertions of that kingdom," which was appointed for consideration in the House of Lords on the 22d of February. On the 17th of that month Lord Grenville forwarded to Lord Sidmouth "the sketch of an amendment avoiding," as he observed, "the positive refusal of granting this pecuniary aid to Portugal, which might appear ungracious, however visionary the project of defending Portugal by English money and English troops against the united force of the whole Continent." To this note Lord Sidmouth replied, on the 18th, that "he considered that both our

honour and our immediate interests imposed upon us the obligation of affording to Portugal all the assistance in our power for the purpose of delaying its final subjugation; and he confessed his anxiety that a disposition to this effect should be manifested by parliament without further delay." This declaration appears to have rather disconcerted Lord Grenville, who replied on the same day, that "he was sorry they saw the Portuguese business in so different a light. His own opinion certainly was, that every farthing of money — and what was of much more importance, every British life — that might be lost, in the hope of defending Portugal against the whole force of the Continent, would be wantonly sacrificed, without the hope or even the possibility of advantage to them or to ourselves."

Accordingly, when Lord Grenville proposed his amendment to Marquis Wellesley's address to his Majesty in approbation of his gracious message, Lord Sidmouth declared himself in favour of the latter. "Although," he said, "he could not bestow unqualified approbation on the measures of government with respect to the war in the Peninsula, as they had neglected, he thought, to avail themselves of the favourable opportunity for striking a decisive blow, still he should feel much reluctance at withdrawing our succours from Portugal, if, without too great risk, we could assist her with any prospect of success. He thought it would be unjustifiable to withdraw our troops before such a measure became absolutely necessary, and should not, therefore, withhold his assent to the address." *

* The address was carried by 124 against 94. These senti-

It is interesting to observe the different views which these experienced statesmen, each of whom had been prime minister of England, took of the same question:—

Time has shown that the palm of superior foresight belonged, in this instance, to Lord Sidmouth: yet, as that wonderful combination in one man of all the noblest properties belonging to the greatest heroes and statesmen, by which the deliverance of the Peninsula was effected, could not then have possibly been anticipated, it is due to Lord Grenville to admit that, at the period in question, the reasons which induced him to despair of the cause of freedom in Spain and Portugal were at least equally weighty with those by which Lord Sidmouth's more sanguine disposition was influenced.* The recently-expressed opinion of the

ments his Lordship repeated on the 8th of June, when explaining his reasons for opposing Lord Lansdowne's two resolutions condemnatory of the last campaign in Spain. On that occasion "he lamented that the eminent sagacity and judgment of Lord Wellesley had not been earlier applied for the benefit of Spain. As it was, he feared his Lordship's services had been resorted to too late for any efficient purpose. Still such was the attachment he felt to the cause that he would never abandon it."

* The only available opportunity is here presented of introducing a letter addressed, many years afterwards, by the great liberator of the Peninsula, to Lord Sidmouth, who had forwarded to his Grace some document on the subject of this campaign in defence of Portugal:—

"My dear Lord, "Stratfieldsaye, January 23d, 1826.

"I am very much obliged to you for allowing me to peruse the enclosed paper, which is very interesting indeed, and in the greater number of its details is very accurate. It is, however, impossible for any individual in a large army to know all that passes even in that to which he belongs, much less in that of his adversary, particularly at the moment of action and when writing a journal. It

latter, that the close "divisions must soon lead to consequences affecting the present composition of the government," now received confirmation from the commencement of a negotiation on or about the 23d of April, for the formation of an administration on so extended a basis as to include Lord Sidmouth, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Canning, and their respective friends. Lord Wellesley undertook to submit the proposition to Mr. Canning, whilst Mr. Perceval availed himself of the assistance of Mr. Yorke, to communicate with Lord Sidmouth; and several letters were exchanged

is not astonishing, therefore, that this gentleman should have been ignorant of some events which occurred between both armies, of many in ours, and even of some details in that to which he belonged, which he has mis-stated, or has not mentioned; but in general he was well informed, and his account is very interesting.

"The account of the numbers of the French army that entered Portugal agrees with my estimate, which, indeed, was taken from the actual returns. But he omits altogether an entire corps of 15,000 men, which joined them in the country, and, I think, he makes the numbers which quitted the country less than they really were. It is a very curious circumstance that the cause of their destruction in Portugal was the same as the real cause of their destruction in Russia. The contempt of all the ordinary rules of war, and of the means and gallantry of their enemy, and the want and deprivation of food in their own army, and the consequent undisciplined disorders and sickness of the troops, and the hatred of the inhabitants, produced, in both countries, the destruction of the French armies. There was in Russia, besides, the frost to aggravate all their distresses, although in some respects an advantage to them; and, moreover, the Russian armies were more equal in numbers to the French in Russia, both during the attack and the retreat, than I ever was to the French in Portugal. I never had 50,000 men in arms, Portuguese, militia, and all included; and at the period of Massena's retreat I was obliged to detach into Estremadura nearly half of the whole, and those the best troops, to make head against Soult and Mortier. Believe me ever yours most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON.

"The Lord Viscount Sidmouth."

on the occasion between the three last-mentioned parties. As this negotiation, however, was never carried beyond the initiatory step, which Mr. Vansittart observed, "bore so much absurdity on its face, that he could hardly believe it was sincerely made," it is only necessary to give the following statement of the circumstance which Lord Sidmouth addressed to Mr. Bathurst on the 27th of April: —

"A proposition was made to me on Monday, through Yorke, that I and my friends should form part of a general and comprehensive arrangement, including Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, to the latter of whom a simultaneous proposal would be made through Lord Wellesley. By me, I need hardly say, this proposal was instantly declined. It was, however, intimated to me, that there was no expectation of its being accepted by Mr. Canning; and, on Monday evening, I received a letter from Yorke, enclosing one from Perceval, in which the latter says, that 'Mr. Canning's objections, though of a very different description, appeared quite as insurmountable as were those of Lord S. to a general arrangement.' * * * I was also informed, that if the negotiation with C. went off, I should be commanded to wait on his Majesty with a view to an arrangement, on an extended scale, with myself and my friends, there being four cabinet offices to fill up. Thus matters stood on Tuesday, when Yorke returned into Hertfordshire. I have heard nothing since, but I suspect that the interval has not been one of harmony in the cabinet, it being evident that the wishes of Lord W. were not in unison with those of P. and of most of his colleagues.

"After the above was written, I had an interview with Yorke, and found that my objection *in limine* to the general arrangement would prevent any proposition to C."

On learning the above particulars, Mr. Vansittart expressed his opinion that the affair would be suffered to drop where it was, and to expire *sub silentio;* lest it should create further disunion between Mr. Per-

ceval and Lord Wellesley. This conjecture proved correct. Lord Sidmouth saw week after week wear away without receiving any further communication from Mr. Yorke or the government. At length, however, on the 12th of June, Lord Wellesley called upon him, with Mr. Perceval's consent, when a conversation ensued, the substance of which Lord Sidmouth detailed to Mr. Bathurst in the following terms: — "The chief points were, an admission of the weakness of the government, a declaration of his own earnest wish to be associated with me, and a desire to afford Mr. Canning an option of being included in the arrangement. I repeated to him the substance of what I had said to Yorke, and he left me with expressions of regret at finding my determination was not to be shaken." "Nothing, surely," Mr. Bathurst observed in reply, "was ever conducted like this negotiation:" and that remark he might have still more justly applied to an interview between Lord Sidmouth and Mr. Perceval at Richmond Park, on the 16th of July, which the former thus described to him on the following day: — "Perceval came and passed two hours here, but I cannot say that our meeting was satisfactory: Lord Wellesley's difficulties were the beginning, middle, and end of what he had to say. His personal wishes I do not question, but his utter impotence must then be taken in evidence of his sincerity."

Another prolonged pause now ensued, which extended until the 21st of September, on which day Mr. Perceval addressed a confidential letter to Lord Sidmouth in explanation of the "endeavours which his Majesty's ministers had thought it their duty to make

for procuring additional strength to the government." The substance of this communication was, that after the idea that Lord Sidmouth and his friends might be induced to join the present government, together with Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning, was abandoned, and it was found impossible to reconcile Lord Wellesley to any arrangement which would not include Mr. Canning, the ministers had no alternative but either to apply to Lord Sidmouth and Lord Castlereagh, with the certain loss of Lord Wellesley; or to Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning; or to remain *in statu quo*. The *first* of these, upon many obvious considerations, was impossible. An attempt, therefore, had been recently made, though with little expectation of success, to carry the *second* into effect, by ascertaining the feelings of Lord Castlereagh, who replied, as Mr. Perceval had anticipated, "that he should certainly decline the offer if it were made to him." The result, therefore, was, that the government must remain as they were, from the absolute impossibility of making any change that would be advantageous to the public service. Thus was postponed, *sine die*, a negotiation which cannot be said to have possessed at any period more than a nominal existence.

The lamented "return of the malady with which his Majesty had already been three times afflicted," which Mr. Perceval communicated in a confidential note to Lord Sidmouth on the 30th of October, 1810, and the bereavement which befell his Lordship in the following summer, prevented the renewal of the overture until the spring of 1812, when it was revived with a more successful result.

The necessity of tracing this long and fruitless in-

tercourse with the government to its termination has brought the reader in advance of the correspondence. It is now requisite, therefore, to revert to a few occasions on which Lord Sidmouth took part in the parliamentary proceedings of 1810.

On the House going into committee upon the Stamp Duties Bill, on the 5th of June, his Lordship made a long and able financial speech, in which he recapitulated the arguments he had employed in the preceding year, in favour of the principle he had himself established, of raising as far as practicable within the year the revenue necessary for the expenses of that year, of confining the loan within the narrowest possible limits, and, as some loan was inevitable, of providing for the interest and the gradual liquidation of the principal by the imposition of additional taxes. The present plan was, to derive a large proportion of the means necessary to defray such charges from duties imposed at former periods, which was a departure from the principle which heretofore had been strictly observed. "The dangers," he observed, "against which it was particularly necessary to guard in a protracted war like the present, *were profusion and negligence.* It was essential that there should be one hand only in the public purse: if there were many, even though all were clean, it would quickly be emptied. Individuals might be brought to distress by servants not dishonest, as might a nation by ministers not corrupt. Persons in the various departments of government were naturally anxious for the complete accomplishment of the service entrusted to them, in which cases the cost was too often a disregarded object."

Lord Sidmouth also spoke and voted with the majority in opposition to the resolutions on the state of the nation, which Earl Grey submitted to the House of Lords on the 13th of June; for which course he assigned, two days afterwards, the following reasons to Mr. Bathurst: — "The debate on Lord Grey's motion went off satisfactorily, upon the whole. He, I am sorry to say, is committed to parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation; a reference to each of which (and to the former distinctly) was introduced into the address. The consequence was, that the Duke of Gloucester, Lord Ellenborough, and others, would not vote at all. I had no difficulty in voting against the motion. On the subject of privilege Lord Grey spoke very ably and powerfully. The speech, upon the whole, was highly honourable to him, and, I think, the most considerable display of talents that he has ever made."

On the 19th of June, Lord Sidmouth manifested his attachment to the Church, and his correct judgment of the best remedy for the evils under which she laboured, by moving for returns tending to prove the necessity of providing increased accommodation in churches, and especially free sittings for the use of the poorer classes of society. His object was to facilitate the building and enlargement of churches: with a view, therefore, to future legislation, he moved for a return from each diocese, to be prepared before the next session of parliament, of all the places of worship within it belonging to the Established Church, and of the number of persons each was capable of containing, and also of the number of dissenting meeting-houses situated in each parish. The

motion was readily agreed to; but Lord Holland made some remark on the luxury of the clergy; in reply to which Lord Sidmouth observed, that "there could not be considered any great luxury in the Established Church, when it appeared that out of 10,000 livings upwards of 4000 were of less value than 150*l.* per annum." With this debate the labours of the session ceased, as, two days afterwards, the parliament was prorogued by commission.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1810, 1811.

Return of the King's Malady. Lord Sidmouth supports the Government on the Regency Question. Conduct of the King's Government in 1801 *and* 1804 *respecting his Majesty's Illnesses arraigned in Parliament, and successfully defended. Lord Sidmouth's Bill respecting the Licences of Protestant Dissenting Ministers. Return of Licences taken out in the County of Middlesex. Singular Circumstances at the Quarter Sessions for Stafford. Various Testimony to the Abuses of the Toleration Act. Lord Sidmouth's Bill, on the first Reading, excites great Alarm amongst Dissenters. Is objected to by the Wesleyans, and opposed by the Three Denominations. Letters from Dr. Adam Clarke, Mr. Belsham, and Mr. Wilberforce. The Measure disapproved of by the Latter, who, in* 1797, *dissuaded Mr. Pitt from introducing a Bill which went farther than the present. Anxiety of Mr. Perceval and Lord Liverpool. Second Reading of the Bill negatived. Subsequent Act of* 52 *Geo. III. c.* 155., *for further Relief of Dissenters. Death of Lady Sidmouth.*

A SUBJECT must now be mentioned — the unfortunate event of the King's illness — in which the whole kingdom took a deep and painful interest. On that distressing occasion Mr. Perceval maintained a frequent and confidential correspondence with Lord Sidmouth, whose advice was rendered especially valuable by the circumstance that he had twice seen his Majesty suffering from the same cause during the period of his own administration. The letters which now passed it is deemed more proper to withhold. It will be suffi-

cient to state that his Lordship submitted to Mr. Perceval's perusal all the documents which related to those former occasions, and that they were both, at first, equally sanguine in their expectation of the King's recovery. The serious nature, however, of the present attack soon became apparent; which induced Lord Sidmouth to express to his brother in the following terms his opinion of the steps proper to be pursued: — "I cannot help thinking that the obvious interests as well as duty of all parties will be to avoid contentious discussion at such a time, and upon such an occasion. If the government have common discretion, they will not attempt to add to the restrictions of 1789, and if the Prince is well advised, he will determine to accept what he then accepted. This would be well received by the country, and past subjects of regret and dissatisfaction will be forgotten."

In the debate which occurred respecting the further adjournment of the House of Lords, on the 15th of November, Lord Sidmouth expressed his opinion that "the House was then in a similar situation to that in which it was on the 27th of November, 1788; and as Mr. Perceval had resolved to follow as nearly as possible the precedent established by parliament on that former occasion, his Lordship was enabled, throughout the progress of this painful question, to manifest his devoted attachment to the King by giving his cordial support to the measures of the government. In pursuing this course, "his conduct was most honourable, consistent, and," as his friend Mr. Bond observed, "most disinterested: for it was a daily detaching himself from the only strong party in the country, and a linking himself with the weakest

party that had ever at any period administered its affairs." It was, in truth, the Regency question which finally dissolved the imperfect alliance which, in appearance, had hitherto been maintained between Lord Sidmouth and his ministerial colleagues of the years 1806 and 1807, and enabled him, at length, to resume his original position amongst his early political associates, from which he had been involuntarily excluded in 1804.

Accordingly, when, in the debate of the 4th of January on the resolutions respecting the Regency, Lord Lansdowne moved the omission of all words imposing limitations and restrictions, Lord Sidmouth immediately rose and delivered a long and able speech, which he concluded by observing, that "as his noble friend's amendment appeared to him to overlook the distinction between the temporary authority of the Regent and the permanent authority of the King, whilst the original resolution comprehended what was due to both, he must give his entire and cordial support to the latter." It is not intended to describe the long and warm debates which arose on this question, farther than to state that as Lord Sidmouth, from the deep interest he felt in his Majesty's welfare, fully participated with the ministry in desiring the closest possible adherence to the precedent of 1788, he and his friends divided with them on every controverted point. "I am very anxious," he observed to his brother on the 16th of January, "that the proposed duration of the restrictions should be firmly adhered to, and that an effort should be made by Perceval to render the bill conformable to the original state of the fifth resolution, with the excep-

tion only of the power of removal."* In the debate on the Report of the Regency Bill, upon the 28th of January, Lord Sidmouth answered Lord Grenville, arguing ably and earnestly in support of the proposed restrictions and limitations. They had both sided with Mr. Pitt in 1789, and Lord Grenville, who then filled the Speaker's chair, made one of the best speeches on that side of the question. In the present discussions, his Lordship must have found himself inconveniently situated, from his having adopted, in the interim, a different political line and party; whilst Lord Sidmouth enjoyed the reward of consistency, in having only to pursue the same course which he had followed on the former occasion. During this debate Lord Grey made a severe attack upon the Lord Chancellor Eldon, for having, "in the years 1801 and 1804, used the King's name to public acts at a time when his Majesty was personally incapable of exercising his royal functions." For this accusation there was no foundation whatever. No sooner, therefore, had the Chancellor indignantly denied the truth of the information which Lord Grey had received, than Lord Sidmouth rose to corroborate that denial. "In adverting," he said, "to the conduct of the government in 1801 and 1804, he would affirm, in the presence of their Lordships and the country, that there was not one act which he was not now ready to avow,

* The fifth resolution originally gave her Majesty "power to remove from and appoint such persons as she might think proper to the several offices in his Majesty's household." This power was greatly limited by a vote of the House of Commons, on the motion of Earl Gower, but was afterwards restored nearly to the extent defined by Lord Sidmouth in this passage.

and, when called on, to vindicate. He did not wish to narrow his responsibility to his personal acts, but to claim his full share with every one of his colleagues. He knew it was not becoming to enter into a minute explanation at that moment; but he could say for himself and colleagues that they were ready to justify their conduct in every particular." Could his Lordship have then revealed to the House the admirable letters addressed to him by the King, and the circumstances relating to his Majesty's conduct in 1801 and 1804, which have been submitted to the reader of this work, there would have remained no question as to his Majesty's competency, at the periods in question, to fulfil his royal functions. This, however, was a case where feelings of propriety forbade explanation. The presumed absence, therefore, of the means of defence invited attack; and Mr. Whitbread gave notice of a motion on the subject, to which Lord Sidmouth alluded in the following letter, addressed to Mr. Bathurst on the 7th of February:—

"I attended the meeting of the Privy Council at Carlton House yesterday, when all parties were assembled.* The various expressions in the different countenances were very striking. The Prince's friends give out, that a change had never been decided upon; and those of the Lords G., that *they* prevented its taking place. It will give you pleasure to hear, that the King, *throughout* his illness, spoke of a friend of yours in terms of the strongest affection, and since his amendment, has expressed his confidence in that person, and his satisfaction at his conduct, in a manner that is perfectly gratifying. * * * All hands must be mustered on the day of Whitbread's attack."

* When the oaths required by the Regency Act were administered to the Prince Regent.

A few days afterwards, he informed his brother that "Mr. Whitbread, on Mr. Bathurst's and his (Mr. Hiley Addington's) account, had obligingly postponed his motion until Monday, the 25th." Writing to the same party on the 19th, Lord Sidmouth resumed the topic: —

"On Saturday, there is to be a meeting at Yorke's, consisting of cabinet ministers, actual and *ci-devant*, with the addition of Bathurst. * * * I saw Whitbread yesterday whilst I was walking with the Chancellor*, and thanked him for the readiness with which he had accommodated you and Bathurst. My conversation with Lord Castlereagh yesterday was very satisfactory. He has desired to lead the van, and it is fit on all accounts that he should do so, particularly as he was in the cabinet in 1804. I wish I could send you a brief, but it is impossible to make disclosures on so delicate a subject. Lord Castlereagh is of opinion that the substance even of the minutes of cabinet must not be referred to without authority, which can now only be given by the Prince Regent."

Notwithstanding, however, these restrictions, when the subject was debated, on the 25th of February, Lord Castlereagh's and Mr. Yorke's defence was so triumphant in every respect, that Mr. Bathurst, feeling he "could not add one word to their statements, did not consider it necessary to speak in Lord Sidmouth's justification." The motion was negatived by more than two to one; the opponents being 198 over 81 — a majority which strongly indicated the feeling

* The Chancellor was specially the object of Mr. Whitbread's censures. Lord Sidmouth was of opinion that Lord Eldon rather invited the unmerited attacks he so often sustained, by the sensitiveness he exhibited under them. "I am like a thing that is raw," he once said to Lord Sidmouth. "Why am I thus singled out?" "First," his Lordship replied, "because you are eminent; and, secondly, because you are sore."

of the House, since on every other division relating to the Regency question the numbers were almost equally balanced.*

The subject next presented for consideration is Lord Sidmouth's bill relating to Protestant dissenting ministers, a subject which the author approaches with considerable anxiety. The earliest intimation he finds of his Lordship's wish to remedy the prevalent abuses of the statutes the 1st Will. & Mary, c. 18., commonly styled the "Toleration Act," and the 19th George III. c. 44., as regarded the licenses of dissenting teachers, is contained in the following extract from a letter which the Bishop of Gloucester addressed to him on the 24th of May, 1809: —

"You ask for my ideas with respect to licenses. As matters now are, the case stands thus: — Although the law of the land pronounces a minor to be incompetent for almost every transaction of a civil nature, yet any person, whether minor

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* Lord Sidmouth has carefully preserved the examinations of the physicians and the minutes of council thereon, amongst the papers relating to these transactions. They contain the fullest and most satisfactory explanation of his Lordship's conduct on both those occasions; showing that he deserved the highest praise where blame was most imputed; but as no further suspicion was ever expressed on this subject after the discussion of Mr. Whitbread's motion, and as Lord Eldon's biographer, in his highly successful defence of his Lordship, has at the same time justified Lord Sidmouth, it is thought advisable, amidst the press of other matter, not to introduce those documents. Since, however, the parsimonious recompence of the King's physicians has recently been made a subject of accusation against Mr. Addington, in the diary so often corrected in this work, it is desirable to state here that there are vouchers from Dr. Willis and his two sons which show that the remuneration they received was ten thousand pounds.

or not, is competent to be a teacher of religion, if he doth but conform to the requisitions of 19 Geo. III. c. 44. A more gross absurdity is scarce conceivable. Again: in every other appointment, inquiry is made into character; but a claimant shall be appointed to teach and preach religion without the least antecedent inquiry who he is or what he is. Can any thing be more inconsistent with propriety? * * * I think 19 Geo. III. might be amended, and that clauses following such preambles as this might have salutary effect: Whereas it is expedient that public teachers of religion should be of competent age; and whereas the primitive Christians admitted none to be ministers but such as were of known and approved character for good morals. Their licenses should be to a given place. They should not be restrained from moving, but when they went to another congregation, they should take fresh license. It is thus we are compelled to act. * * * I would not, however, push you on hastily. Consult leading men; unless such would support you, I should not urge you to press the question. * * * It is not enough to talk with *us*. Much discussion should previously be had with principal men among the Dissenters. If *they* approved, you would have the popular sense *going with you* as when you were minister. There must be no force in matters of religion! * * * There is another mode of serving the establishment most essentially, and benefiting mankind most substantially: — *Build Churches*, and appropriate the area to the poor; and remove the impediments which now deter well-disposed persons from making the attempt."

Lord Sidmouth was then collecting information to prove the magnitude of the evil, and the obvious necessity for some legislative remedy. To this end he moved, in the House of Lords, on the 2d of June, 1809, for returns of licenses to preach, issued in the various dioceses in England and Wales since the year 1780; and so important was the subject considered, that it received the warmest encouragement from every peer who spoke on the occasion. Lord Har-

rowby moved that the returns applied for should commence from the year 1760 instead of 1780. The Archbishop of Canterbury approved both of the motion and the amendment. Earl Grosvenor "thought the matter of the highest consequence, and concurred in much of what had fallen from preceding speakers;" and the Lord Chancellor expressed his hope that something might be done to prevent the abuses practised under the Toleration Act. Lord Sidmouth, in his speech, had earnestly disclaimed any intention of interfering with that act; and the consequence of his motion was, that he received a large accession of information, fully proving the necessity of some measure on the subject. At this period neither panic nor suspicion had arisen; and his Lordship was encouraged to proceed by the arrival of numerous letters from Dissenters as well as Churchmen, strongly lamenting existing evils, and calling for or suggesting remedial measures. Amongst the communications of this nature, was one from Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Durham, to whom Lord Sidmouth had forwarded an intimation that he should like to be favoured with his sentiments on the subject. The letter is dated "Mongewell, 11th July, 1809," and, after expressing the Bishop's warm approbation of the Toleration Act, it proceeds as follows: —

"The framers, however, of that act conceived that the religious duties of the respective congregations would never be performed but in places exclusively appropriated to divine service, and by ministers qualified by education, by attested respectability in point of morals, and of a proper age to add weight to their prayers and impression to their instructions. So long as the Toleration Act was thus understood, dissenting

teachers were respected by their own people, and esteemed by the Establishment; but with modern sectaries the case is very different. They assemble in barns, in rooms of private houses, or in other buildings of the most improper kind, to hear the wild effusions of a mechanic or a ploughboy, perhaps not more than 15 years of age, destitute of the first rudiments of learning, sacred or profane. To remedy these abuses, the following restrictions appear to be necessary:—First, that no person be allowed to officiate under the age of 21 years, complete, or without such testimonials as to his ability and moral character as the legislature shall determine; and, secondly, that the license be confined to a particular congregation, and remain in force no longer than the teacher continues to officiate there."

Amongst other documents of this period is a return of 285 licenses taken out at the sessions of the peace for the county of Middlesex, to which is appended a "transcript of eighteen different ways in which the words 'dissenting, minister, teacher, preacher, and gospel,' had been mis-spelt by the applicants who signed the rolls."* This might have been regarded as

* The paper is entitled "An Account of the Number of Persons who have taken out Licenses as Dissenting Teachers, &c. &c. at the Sessions of the Peace for the County of Middlesex." The following is an accurate transcript of the passage alluded to in the text. "The different ways in which the words 'Minister,' 'Teacher,' 'Preacher of the Gospel,' are spelt by many of them, and signed on the Rolls, are as follows:—

"Preacher of the Gopel.
Preacher of the Gosple.
Precher of the Gospel.
Precher of the Gospell.
Preacher of the Gospell.
Preach of the Gospell.
Precher of the Gosple.
Precher of Gospell.

a solitary instance, if unfortunately Lord Sidmouth's present appeal to the various dioceses had not brought to light several others equally lamentable and humiliating. From these, two have been selected, the first of which was published at the time by Doctor Luke Booker, rector of Sedstone, Herefordshire, in a pamphlet bearing the title of "An Address to the Imperial Legislature," and describes a circumstance which had recently occurred at the quarter sessions at Stafford: —

"The magistrates assembled, having received some previous intimation that a man who could neither read nor write meant to apply for a licence to become a religious teacher; and being desirous of learning whether what had been told them concerning the ignorance of the applicant was true, the chairman bade him take a pen and sign his name. To this he replied, 'I don't come here to write: I have no business to sign any thing.' 'No?' said the magistrate; 'read the clause in this Act of Parliament, and then you will see whether you are required to sign your name or not: please to read out.' 'I don't come here,' was the reply, 'either to read or write.' 'Pray,' said the magistrate, 'can you write?' 'I am not ashamed to say,' replied he, 'that I can't.' 'Can you read?' 'No.' 'Why, surely, it is very strange that you, who can neither read nor write, should presume to take upon yourself

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Miniester of the Gospel.
Preacher of the Ghosper.
Preacher of teacher the Gospel Bappist.
Preeacher of the Gospel.
Teacher of the Gospell of Jesus Christ.
A discenting teacher.
Desenting teacher.
Decenting teacher.
Prashr of the Gosepll.
Preicher of the Gospel."

the important office of a religious teacher, when you are not able to peruse the Bible, which is the fountain of religion.' To this pointed reproof, he replied, 'If *you* don't know what inspiration is, *I* do, for I have felt it.' He then threw down his sixpence, took up his licence, and went his way to preach the gospel which he could not read."

The other statement proceeded from Mr. Sparrow, chairman of the general quarter sessions for the county of Stafford, and described what had occurred at the recent sessions. "Fifteen men," he observed, "of whom nine were journeymen potters, presented themselves, and required to take the usual oaths to qualify themselves for Methodist preachers. On examining them separately whether they were teachers of any congregation, ten of the fifteen answered in the negative. On inquiring further whether they had been educated for the ministry, and where they received their instruction, they individually answered, 'From God and the Holy Ghost.' When asked whether they could read, they said they could read the Bible, but they did not consider school education requisite; they were qualified by the Holy Spirit. These ten were rejected," whether legally so, Mr. Sparrow strongly, and, it is believed, correctly doubted.* "It was,

* To show that Mr. Sparrow's doubts were well founded, the reader is referred to the case of Rex against the Justices of Derbyshire, Blackstone's Reports, p. 606., in which the Court of King's Bench appears to have decided that the duty of justices of the peace at quarter sessions in administering the oaths to Dissenters, and registering their places of worship, was ministerial only. Yet from the correspondence which took place relative to this bill, and the returns mentioned in the text, there can be no doubt that many persons drew a distinction between the second and eighth sections of the Toleration Act — the word "required" being used in the one, and the word "authorised" in the other —

indeed, lamentable," as that gentleman observed in conclusion, "that a set of such low illiterate fanatics should be allowed to disturb the order of society, and delude the weak and unwary." Truly this was a perversion of the Gospel." Nor was the dissemination of doctrinal errors the only evil resulting from such abuses of toleration; for the testimony was almost universal to the fact that evil-disposed persons took advantage of licenses obtained under the act, to instil contempt for the religious and civil institutions of the country, and to sow the seeds of discontent and sedition. Evidence to this effect was forwarded from numerous quarters, especially from Bath, by Archdeacon Daubeny; Swaffham, by Chancellor Yonge; and Ashford, by the Rev. John Nance; the latter of whom wrote as follows in February, 1810: — "I beg to apprise Lord Sidmouth that the Methodist preachers do not confine their exertions to the propagation of their own opinions, but are employed in defeating the labours of the regular clergy. They uniformly tell the children whom we catechise, and their parents, that the Church Catechism is (in their coarse language) a heap of nonsense, and many of them affirm it is criminal to have a Common Prayer Book in their houses." Another instance is supplied by Dr. Booker, who, in his "Address" already referred to, cites a case "in his own

and that difficulties were sometimes thrown in the way of persons desirous to qualify as dissenting ministers. The provisions, therefore, of Lord Sidmouth's bill, which would have removed the doubts therein recited to have arisen as to the description of persons to whom the provisions of the Toleration Act and the act of 19 Geo. III. c. 44. applied, were intended to confer a considerable benefit on Dissenters.

neighbourhood, where one of these teachers told his hearers that 'all the knowledge of the clergy was only bought learning, whereas *his* knowledge was inspired.' These were his words; and one of his hearers, a female, told the Rector, who went to reason with her, that 'she as firmly believed the man was inspired as that the first apostles were inspired; and that it was her duty to pay the same attention to what *he* said as to *their* writings.'" To these and similar facts, which fully proved the necessity of rescuing, if possible, Lord Somers's celebrated measure for the protection of religious liberty from the abuses which had grown out of it, confirmation was given by the returns from the various dioceses, which poured in during the year 1810. It was Lord Sidmouth's original intention to have made a motion on the subject in that session, but on maturer deliberation he postponed the step until the following year. On announcing this to the House, he took occasion distinctly to state, "that in the measure he purposed to introduce, he meant nothing hostile to the Dissenters. He considered the Toleration Act as the palladium of religious liberty, and had not the slightest intention of proposing any infringement of it."

Here the question rested until the session of 1811, when Lord Sidmouth fulfilled his intention of bringing it forward. His Lordship's earliest mention of the subject was in a letter addressed to his brother on the 20th of April, by which time slight indications of the approaching storm of opposition began to present themselves: — "I am very busy," he says, "at present upon my bill. On Monday se'nnight my notice will be given for the Monday following. This morning

I had a meeting with Dr. Coke, the head of the Wesleyan Methodists, and have completely satisfied him. His apprehensions are converted into zealous approbation."*

Lord Sidmouth, during the preparation of his bill, took every opportunity of consulting the leading parties in the government, the Church, and amongst the Dissenters; and he certainly considered that he had received their approbation of it to a much greater extent than, in the result, proved to be the case. That he had strong grounds for the statement respecting Dr. Coke contained in the foregoing extract, is shown by the following passages selected from a letter which he received three days afterwards from that reverend gentleman: —

"My Lord, No. 14. City Road, April 23d, 1811.

"I recommend to your Lordship John Wilson, Esq., Islington, as the most proper person to give your Lordship information in respect to the society and congregations in London late in connexion with Mr. George Whitfield. * * * I have been maturely considering the nature of the probationary licenses which your Lordship spoke of when I had the

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* Dr. Coke had received priest's orders in the Church of England, and on the establishment of episcopacy in India in 1813, he wrote to Lord Liverpool to offer himself as the first bishop, and engaged "to return most fully and faithfully into the bosom of the Established Church, to do every thing in his power to promote its interests, and to submit to all such restrictions in the fulfilment of his office as the government and the bench of bishops at home should think necessary." (See his letter of April 14th, 1813, to Mr. Wilberforce.) In the same letter he observed: — "I have reason to believe Lord Eldon has an esteem for me. Lord Sidmouth, I do think, loves me." It will appear in the sequel that his Lordship was too sanguine in his expectation that he had removed the Doctor's objections.

honour of an interview with you. The plan of a year's probation would be quite sufficient for the Dissenters, as they have academies for the previous instruction of those who are to be called to the ministry. But we have no such academies. * * * As we believe that the Unitarian sentiments and doctrines were introduced among the Dissenters by their means, and as we have no regular confession of faith (the thirty-nine Articles of the Established Church excepted), we should be in greater danger of fatal errors than the Dissenters if we had academies like them. Our local preachers, therefore, begin to exercise their talents at a low state of improvement, so that it is highly expedient that their probationary license should be for *two* years. This would do perfectly well, and a less time than this would do considerable injury to Mr. Wesley's connexion; whilst, on the other hand, it would be of little consequence to the Dissenters whether it were one year or two: and I am confident, my Lord, from the love of religion and morality which you discovered when I was indulged with an interview, that you will lengthen out the probation to two years, if you view the subject as I do."*

The writer went on to describe the injury which the bill would inflict on the "itinerant plan of the Methodists, if it were to proceed so far as to prevent the licensing of rooms in private houses as places of worship," and concluded with an offer to wait upon Lord Sidmouth again on this momentous business, if his Lordship would appoint the time for another interview.

Thus encouraged and advised, Lord Sidmouth pro-

* It is a circumstance which tends to show the impossibility of reconciling the various descriptions of Dissenters to the acceptance of any measure intended for their general benefit, that, shortly after Dr. Coke had thus pressed for an extension of the period of probation, Mr. Belsham, an Unitarian writer, published "A Letter to Lord Sidmouth," in which he stated that the "whole clause relating to probationers had excited greater alarm and dislike than any other provision of the bill."

ceeded with his bill, which it appears, from the following note addressed to his brother on the 5th of May, was completed by that day: — "The near approach of Thursday rather disturbs me, as I am not quite well, and have had no leisure since I came to town. The bill, however, is drawn, and I think will do. I cannot anticipate the result. Many will think that a stronger measure is necessary, and some that matters should remain as they are. I have conversed with the Archbishop, the Bishops of London, Durham, Ely, Carlisle, and Salisbury, and with Lords Eldon, Redesdale, Ellenborough, Erskine, &c. &c., and with the Speaker, Sir William Scott, Hatsell, and Bond. God send me a good deliverance!"

On the 9th of May, "before he went to the place of execution," he sent a parting line to his brother. "What the result will be," he proceeded to say, "is uncertain. I know not whether I am to be supported or opposed by the phalanx on either side, or let down easy by both. From my communications with Dissenters, I should think the measure *in itself* will be well taken by them; but they fear it will open the door to something more. I must say, however, that I have, as yet, had great reason to be satisfied with their conduct in all the communications which have taken place between us."

But his Lordship's motives and feelings on presenting his bill to the House of Peers are more fully shown in a manuscript pamphlet of more than forty pages, written and evidently composed by himself, which has been discovered amongst the papers relating to this subject. It purports to be an answer to Mr. Belsham's letter to his Lordship, recently referred

to; and although it was not published, it bears traces of much elaborate revision; and therefore must undoubtedly be regarded as expressing Lord Sidmouth's deliberate opinions on the question. To this valuable document, therefore, recourse will now be had, in explaining his Lordship's views. As regards the introduction of the bill, after reciting various passages from Mr. Belsham's letter*, the MS. proceeds as follows:—

"On the expediency of parliamentary interference, we have here the opinion of an earnest Dissenter, and on this point we certainly never met with any diversity of sentiments amongst the members of the Church of England. Previous to the introduction of his bill, Lord Sidmouth, in two succeeding sessions, directed the attention of the House of Lords to the subject of it, by moving for information of which it was material that parliament should be possessed. On each of those occasions he declared, that he felt as strongly as any one what was due to the right of private judgment in matters of religious

* Of these extracts the following are the most striking:—"Mr. Belsham admits, p. 4., that 'for an ignorant booby, who can neither read nor write, to demand to qualify as a dissenting minister, and for such a man to assume the office of a Christian teacher, is an insult upon common sense and common decency;' and he adds, in p. 8., 'nothing truly can be more unbecoming than that nonsense and impiety should be spoken in the name of the God of truth.' In prevention, indeed, of such evils, Mr. Belsham deprecates parliamentary interference, but he declares it to be necessary on other accounts. 'It has been asked,' he says, 'why did your Lordship disturb what was previously at rest?' In reply to this, I, my Lord, for one, say that there was sufficient reason for proposing some amendment in the law relating to the liberty of religious worship. It was high time that the law should be understood. It is not right that what is law in one county should not be law in another: surely, therefore, it could not be improper for your Lordship to come forward and, in your legislative capacity, to propose arrangements to put a stop to this strange and growing anomaly.'"

faith, and to the freedom of public worship; that his object was, not to alter, but, by suppression of abuses, to carry into effect the existing laws of toleration, and even to extend the limits of toleration itself; that, so far from being actuated by a spirit of hostility to Dissenters, he should propose nothing of which he should not be desirous if he was a conscientious Dissenter himself; that he therefore hoped for the support of all persons of that description, as, whatever might be the differences of opinion on points of doctrine and discipline between them and the members of the Church of England, all had an equal interest and an equal duty in upholding the reverence due to religion. On the 9th of May," the MS. proceeds, "Lord Sidmouth presented to the House of Lords a bill, which, in its provisions, was strictly conformable with the above declarations. It was previously approved of by the heads of the church, by the leading members of the government, and by persons of respectability amongst the Dissenters, and particularly by that class of separatists to whom the new regulations which it proposed to enact particularly applied. The purposes of it are thus candidly described by Mr. Belsham:— 'The bill has been much misunderstood and greatly misrepresented. Your Lordship's design was to exclude from the Christian ministry the ignorant and the vicious; to extend the benefits of legal toleration to many respectable persons who are now protected only by connivance; to render the law intelligible and uniform; and to make it imperative upon the magistrate in the cases to which the statute was intended to apply.'" *

Such were the grounds on which Lord Sidmouth,

* There is no title-page to the copy of Mr. Belsham's "Letter to Lord Sidmouth," now lying before the author. It is dated, "Hackney, June 19th, 1811," and was printed by "H. Bryer, Bridge Street, Blackfriars." The presentation copy was accompanied by the following note:—"Mr. Belsham requests that Lord Viscount Sidmouth will have the goodness to accept a humble attempt to which Mr. B. was impelled by a sense of honour and duty to do justice to his Lordship's motives and intentions in bringing forward his late measure relating to dissenting ministers, and likewise to the nature and tendency of the measure itself."

not without anxiety, moved the first reading of his bill, in a speech which was afterwards much commended both for its ability and moderation. Lord Holland made several objections to it; but on the whole, as Lord Sidmouth told his brother two days afterwards, "the business went off as well as he expected, and he began to hope that he should effect his object. The attendance of bishops in the House, and of dissenting ministers below the bar, was very great. It is," he added, "the most laborious, though not the most attractive concern in which I have ever been engaged; but I trust that good will arise from it." Scarcely, however, had the bill appeared, when it occasioned a general excitement amongst the Dissenters.* The earliest intimation which Lord Sidmouth received of the rising storm was from Mr. Thompson, M.P., a member of the Methodist connexion, who, on the 14th of May, "requested permission to wait on his Lordship, accompanied by a deputation," and added, that he "had scarcely ever known any measure which had excited so universal alarm in so short a period." The purposes for which this deputation was employed may be inferred from the following passages in two letters which Lord Sidmouth received on the 14th and 15th of May from Dr. Adam Clarke, who, at the interview alluded to in the former one, had appeared, as his Lordship believed, perfectly satisfied with the bill. It seems, however, from the learned doctor's account, that it was not the *ministers*, but the *lay members* of the Methodist connexion, who first sounded the alarm, and

* To quote the words of Mr. Belsham's letter, "it called forth the morbid sensibility of the whole body."

by calling a *general committee*, prevented the beneficial objects of the bill from being properly explained and understood. It was impossible, indeed, but that men like Dr. Clarke and Dr. Coke, who would have been ornaments to any church in any era, must have rejoiced at the introduction of just and reasonable regulations tending to render their fellow-preachers more respectable and select, and to rescue their humbler brethren from instructors perhaps not less ignorant than themselves. Unfortunately, Dr. Clarke's letters extend to such a length, that it is only possible to extract from them a few passages comprehending the reasons he assigned for this unexpected opposition of the Wesleyan body: —

"My Lord, Harpur Street, May 14th, 1811.

"Your Lordship's condescension in favouring me, in conjunction with Dr. Coke, with so full an opportunity to explain a number of particulars relating to that religious people to whom I have the happiness to belong, induces me thus further to trouble your Lordship on the subject of the bill now before the Lords.

"Our *general committee* met on it this morning, and they were decidedly of opinion that its operation would be very injurious. I explained to them your Lordship's friendly designs and good-will towards us, and while they acknowledged this with becoming gratitude, the committee, and especially the lay members of it, who feel much alive to our civil interests, stated insurmountable difficulties which would arise to *us* through the operation of the bill, if it should pass into a law. They have, therefore, drawn up certain resolutions on the subject, which they will transmit to your Lordship with all convenient speed.

"I plainly perceive, from the alarm that is excited among Dissenters, that however laudable your Lordship's designs are towards the respectability of the Christian ministry and the interests of true religion, that the subject of toleration is

so delicate that it can scarcely be touched without producing a general ferment. I have, indeed, felt considerable distress on this ground, knowing, as I do, your Lordship's benevolent intentions. * * * For my own part, I must state, that the great solicitude which your Lordship has expressed for true religion, and the becoming manner in which, in your speech before the Lords, you reprobated the spirit of intolerance, does you the utmost credit; and I feel highly gratified with the full conviction of the purity of your motives, and *the importance of the object which your Lordship keeps so steadily in view.*"

The Doctor then stated, that Methodist preachers could not comply with the clause of the bill which required all ministers to be licensed, because "they could not propose themselves as *dissenting ministers.* My Lord," he added, "*we are not Dissenters.* In our doctrine, both religious and political, we are the same as the Established Church; in our *form* of worship, we approach as near as we possibly can, the peculiar circumstances of our *itinerancy* considered."

Arguing upon the supposition, that Lord Sidmouth's bill contracted the "broad interpretation generally given to the Toleration Act, by which their teachers had obtained licenses as *Methodist preachers*," and limited the benefits of that Act to "*dissenting ministers, and to none others,*" Dr. Clarke next proceeded to declare that neither he himself, nor many of their "local and itinerant preachers," could conscientiously qualify as *dissenting ministers*, and must, therefore, under the bill, remain subject to penalties. The learned Doctor then assumes credit, on behalf of the society, for having "done the state some service during the epidemic frenzy of the revolutionary fever, when the Methodist preachers were at

their post proclaiming, 'Fear God, honour the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.' They claimed nothing from the state, however, on that account; but desired only protection, and *that* no longer than they demeaned themselves as peaceable and loyal subjects."

Dr. Clarke's second letter, dated May 15th, was written "*in confidence;*" and, as an individual wholly unconnected in any official way with the question raised on Lord Sidmouth's bill, to acknowledge, with gratitude, the obligations which religious people, not of the Establishment, were under to his Lordship's great good-will. He deeply regretted the injudicious appeals which had been made to the feelings of the religious public; — appeals not made by *them*, for they had repeatedly declined to join in them. As far as he could judge, religious people were more afraid of the Conventicle Act than of his Lordship's bill; lest the former, now considered to be asleep, should be awakened by the latter.

"Leaving, however," he proceeds, "this most uncomfortable subject, I have now only one favour to request of your Lordship, which is, that you will permit me, as the highest proof I can give of the great respect I feel for you, to present your Lordship with a copy of my notes on the Book of Genesis, in which, I flatter myself, your Lordship will find the pure doctrines of the Church of England and the sound principles of the British constitution illustrated and defended. The general preface, which gives a systematic account of commentators both ancient and modern, Jewish and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, as well as a history of the present authorised version, and the compiling and improvement of *our liturgy*, will amuse your Lordship in some vacant hour, though it cannot pretend to bring any thing new to your notice. This has been written some days. I hesitated at

first; but at length my *respect*— may I be permitted to say, *affection*—for your Lordship has induced me to send it with the accompanying volume. I feel for your Lordship; I feel for my people; and I feel for the public tranquillity. May God direct your Lordship what to do in the present measure! To put it off for a while would allay the present ferment, which seems to acquire strength by going. I am, more than I can express, your Lordship's much obliged, grateful, and humble servant,

" A. CLARKE."

The symptoms of the times had now become unequivocal; and on the 16th Lord Sidmouth wrote to "assure his brother that he was still in the land of the living, though continually harassed with letters, pelted at by resolutions, and annoyed by deputations. He should, however, persevere. The prevailing opinion," he added, "as far as he could judge, was strongly in favour of the measure he had proposed, and the uproar that had commenced, and would increase, would check those who thought that more should be attempted." Petitions were now pouring in from various quarters. This, however, was but the beginning of evils, and his Lordship quickly found that neither explanation nor argument could allay the panic which, as Dr. Clarke complained, "had been so hastily and injudiciously raised." "Such," Mr. Belsham observed, "was the extraordinary unanimity of persons most hostile to each other in their religious sentiments, in their efforts to procure the rejection of the measure at even the earliest stage, that one would suppose, instead of professing to extend the benefits of legal toleration, that it was a bill of pains and penalties, intended to call into action

the dormant energies of the penal laws." This candid admission, however, did not prevent the last-named gentleman from conveying to his Lordship "the sentiments of his brethren, the ministers of the three denominations, who, at a very full meeting on the 16th of May, had unanimously agreed to a petition against the bill, which was to be presented to the House on the following day." This object he effected on the 16th and 19th of May, by means of two letters, from which, as they rival in length those of Dr. Clarke, only a few passages can be extracted.

"On referring to the petition," Mr. Belsham remarks, "your Lordship will see that the objections urged partly refer to the restrictions as to the *objects* to whom the toleration is to extend, and partly to the *new modes* of obtaining certificates, which are regarded as unnecessarily burdensome." These last objections, Mr. Belsham admitted, might be easily mitigated, if not wholly superseded, by the adoption of some such alterations as had been suggested in the conversation with which he had lately been favoured by Lord Sidmouth.* The other objection respecting the restric-

* It appears from the copy of the bill used by Lord Sidmouth, that he altered the clause before the debate on the second reading, by inserting the words "for any three or more dissenting ministers duly qualified according to law, and of the same sect and persuasion as the person applying, or," before the original words, "for any six or more substantial and reputable householders." The same remark, that the general terms "substantial and reputable" might be cavilled at by unwilling magistrates, had also been made by Dr. Adam Clarke. To these objections Mr. Belsham, in his printed letter, added another, too frivolous to have emanated from such a man, namely, that it would occasion trouble to find a witness to attest to the signatures of the householders — as if the act of constituting a man a spiritual instructor of others for life,

tions, Mr. Belsham acknowledged to be insurmountable, and thereby placed himself directly at issue with Lord Sidmouth, the *chief*, indeed the *real* object of whose bill was, to prevent incompetent persons—at least, without exhibiting some testimonial besides their own, as to moral and intellectual fitness—from assuming the awful responsibility of directing the eternal interests of their fellow-creatures. Mr. Belsham "fully agreed with his Lordship that it was an inexcusable thing, and a disgrace to the Christian ministry, that ignorant, illiterate, and unqualified persons should intrude into the sacred office; but to subject these misguided persons to the severity of the law," for exercising the office of preacher without having conformed to the provisions of this bill, "would be, he conceived, a serious restriction of the Toleration Act," and constituted, as he observed afterwards in his printed letter, "the fatal original blot in his Lordship's bill."*

is not of sufficient importance to justify the imposition of this slight additional exertion.

* These words, be it remembered, expressed not merely Mr. Belsham's own sentiments, but those also of the petitioning ministers of the three denominations; and the obvious interpretation of them is, that whilst the Dissenters were willing to accept any relaxation or modification of the existing law in their favour that might be contemplated in Lord Sidmouth's bill, they would not in return submit to the slightest restriction whatever in the provisions of the Toleration Act, in order to promote the grand object of the measure (that object which Mr. Belsham himself pronounced to be desirable), namely, "excluding the ignorant and the vicious from the Christian ministry." Mr. Belsham, in his correspondence, studiously kept out of sight the very obvious distinction between a man's privately entertaining whatever opinions on religious subjects he pleases, which is a right that should not be interfered with, and his *openly teaching* such opinions, an act which may be

Mr. Belsham next proceeded to show how the measure "might be so modified as to be most gratefully received by the Dissenters at large;" but as his plan

injurious to the public peace or the public morals, and is, therefore, an act properly subject to the interference of the state. When defending, in his "Letter to Lord Sidmouth," (p. 19.) the fallacy that "every man may preach or teach without molestation," Mr. Belsham actually had recourse to such absurdity as this: — "Let the miserable fanatic who fancies that he is inwardly called to reform the world, pour out his pious nonsense. *His raving is harmless.* He will quickly find that he can get no hearers, and after having tried his gifts till he is tired, honest John will return to his bodkin or his awl, perhaps convinced that he has mistaken his profession, or more probably, denouncing the vengeance of Heaven upon those who refuse to listen to so divine a teacher." There is something truly sorrowful in such mirth as this, when it is considered that the object upon which *honest John* is here supposed to have tried his gifts unsuccessfully, is the salvation of immortal souls. The welfare of every nation depends on the conduct of its majority. In this country, the majority *then* consisted, it is feared *still* consists, of uninstructed persons. Honest John, therefore, however ignorant or fanatical, could scarcely fail of finding others as ignorant and fanatical as himself. These would readily become his hearers. He would easily impregnate them with his sentiments, and bend them to his purposes. How, then, could it be said that "*his ravings were harmless?*"* "In their resolutions," wrote Bishop Huntingford on the 19th of May, "the deputies of Protestant Dissenters assert their right to attend any preacher they please. Certainly. But it does not thence follow that every person has a right to become a preacher. The hearer and the teacher stand in two distinct situations. The former passes on in silence, the latter directs public attention to that of which the civil magistrate may take cognisance by allowing, if constitutionally right, and disallowing, if constitutionally wrong. From his avowed publicity, therefore, he is amenable to public restriction. If the preacher were not subject to such control, society could not exist."

* This is clearly proved by the numbers who followed Joanna Southcott, and, more recently, the insane impostor, Thoms, who stirred up such multitudes in Kent.

consisted in increasing the immunities already conferred upon Dissenters by former acts, and entirely excluded the principle of restraining incompetent preachers, which was Lord Sidmouth's inducement for resorting to legislation at all, it does not appear necessary to make further extracts from his correspondence, the remainder of which was little more than a repetition of his former arguments.

If Lord Sidmouth had acquiesced in the propriety of leaving the evil of ignorant and vicious teachers to cure itself, as suggested by Mr. Belsham, there would in reality have been no occasion for any bill whatever. For Mr. Belsham's favourite object of making the law uniform, by a declaratory act, reconciling a supposed inconsistency in the second and eighth clauses, respecting the words "required and empowered," was rendered unnecessary by the decision of the court of King's Bench, already referred to in a note.

Whilst thus sustaining the attack of the three denominations, Lord Sidmouth encountered a fresh and most unexpected opposition from his old friend Mr. Wilberforce, who apprehended that the operation of the bill would prevent certain clergymen from giving lectures and holding prayer meetings in private houses instead of their churches. It is stated in his "Life" that "he feared lest the bill should cripple the pastoral instructions of the clergy, and that he enforced on Lord Sidmouth, that he must provide that members of the Church of England might meet together for devotional exercises without declaring themselves Dissenters." Surely the churchmanship of the persons here alluded to by Mr. Wilberforce must, even in his

own opinion, have hung very loosely about them, since he twice intimates his fears, that "if the bill should pass, *they would go off to the Methodists*," that bill having for its object to elevate the moral and religious standard of dissenting ministers — a result in which every conscientious friend of the Church ought heartily to rejoice. A ridiculous report afterwards arose, which annoyed Mr. Wilberforce more than it need have done, that he was of council to Lord Sidmouth in promoting this measure. This gave umbrage to the Methodists, who, as his "Life" informs us*, "had been such zealous friends to him in the contest of 1807." Mr. Wilberforce, therefore, on the 17th of August, 1811, addressed a letter, or rather a private pamphlet, of not less than six-and-twenty pages, to Lord Sidmouth, in which he expressed, with much earnestness, his great respect for the Methodists, and requested his Lordship to contradict the report, which he readily did in a manner that is declared by Mr. Wilberforce's sons to have been perfectly satisfactory. Considering Lord Sidmouth's friendly intentions towards the Wesleyans, and the footing on which he stood with the great ornaments of their connexion, Dr. Adam Clarke and Dr. Coke — the former of whom regarded him with affection, and the latter with respect, as long as they lived — he must have felt curious to learn the reason why that body took such umbrage at Mr. Wilberforce's rumoured co-operation with him, and why, also, his old friend should have shown such extreme anxiety to disavow the alliance. His Lordship must also have been much

* Vol. iii. p. 511.

struck by the following passage in Mr. Wilberforce's letter, explaining the reason why Mr. Pitt had not, years before, removed all occasion for the present bill.

"You cannot but recollect—because I know that Pitt was then in the habit of consulting with you on all questions of importance—that (I think about the year 1796 or 1797) he took up a measure, which had been first devised by Mr. M. A. Taylor, for altering the Toleration Act. His bill, by the way, went vastly further than yours. It would have absolutely prohibited all itinerancy, and the peculiar system of the Methodists in having a rota of ministers. I had several discussions, and, in particular, one long *tête-à-tête* (at supper in Downing Street) with him on the subject; and though the bill was actually drawn, and though it was strongly pressed, in defiance of all its consequences, by one person who, with reason, had great influence over his mind, I at length prevailed with him to pause; and that ended in his not carrying on the measure. Nothing appearing in public, the whole died away. I need not say that I never was myself active in preserving the memory of it, or in talking of my share in the transaction."

A subsequent note in which Mr. Wilberforce adroitly suggested to Lord Sidmouth the withdrawing the bill, by "offering to convey the welcome intelligence to his friends," was quickly followed by one to the same effect from Mr. Perceval, who did not hesitate "to own himself seriously alarmed." To this his Lordship replied, May 20th, "that he could not consent to withdraw the bill, nor could he avoid pressing it, unless he should be compelled to think that it could not be carried. He trusted government would not be influenced by a partial clamour, excited by misrepresentation, which he was satisfied had for its object a manifestation of influence and power, rather than the

prevention of the measure from any serious dread of its consequences."

Scarcely had Lord Sidmouth replied to the preceding communication, when another, from Lord Liverpool, was placed in his hands: —

"My dear Lord, Charterhouse, May 20th, 1811.

"I will certainly meet you at Perceval's to-morrow at twelve. I confess I am much disposed to agree with him on the measure respecting the Dissenters. If it could be carried with their consent or acquiescence I should see no objection; but I doubt whether it is *tanti*, considering the flame which appears to be arising upon the occasion. The consideration, however, which weighs most upon my mind is the following: — The Dissenters, as a body, have brought forward no claims, and have engaged in no political controversy with the establishments of the country for the last fifteen years. We have hitherto felt the advantage of this conduct in all our contests with the Catholics; and I own I am apprehensive that, if the measure in question is to be persevered in, we may unite the Catholics and all other Dissenters in the same cause.

"I am yours, &c. &c. LIVERPOOL."

Lord Sidmouth replied to this letter in terms corresponding with those which he employed in his answer to Mr. Perceval on the same day. His interview with these two leaders of the government took place on the 21st; but occasioned no change in his resolution.

There can be little doubt that the determination which his Lordship manifested on this occasion resulted from an honourable feeling of self-respect. His real sentiments and intentions having been greatly misunderstood and misrepresented, he resolved, if possible, to make them fully known. Could he, at an earlier period, have foreseen the opposi-

tion which his measure was destined to encounter, he probably would not have proposed it; but being strongly convinced of its propriety, and having received, in the first instance, so much encouragement, he would not now, in obedience to a popular outcry, withdraw it at the eleventh hour: and for this decision he surely deserved to be approved rather than censured. For admitting the force of Lord Liverpool's argument, that the object to be attained was not equivalent to the inconvenience arising from the agitation and alarm that had been excited, still those ill effects had been already produced, and no further consequences could result from his moving the second reading of the bill, and accompanying that motion with an explanation of the objects which had occasioned its introduction. This would at least afford an opportunity of removing false impressions respecting a measure which Mr. Bond observed "had been more misrepresented than almost any other within his memory," and of placing its real character before the public. Such considerations induced his Lordship to persevere in his motion after its fate had, in reality, been decided. Accordingly, on the 21st of May, he proposed the second reading of the bill; declaring, however, at the same time, that "he would not press its adoption, but having now stated his sentiments, should leave the subject entirely in their Lordships' hands, to dispose of it as to their judgment might seem most proper." His Lordship was followed in the debate by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who "approved of the objects of the bill, as likely to prove highly beneficial to the community at large. Still, however, as the Dissenters, for whose benefit it was

intended, and who ought to be the best judges of what would conduce to their own interests, disapproved of it, his Grace considered it to be unwise and impolitic to press it against their inclination and consent." The collective opinion of the House coincided with this sentiment, and the motion therefore was negatived without a division.

On the day following Lord Sidmouth "availed himself of a few moments of leisure to assure his brother that he was uninjured by the storm which fear, faction, and fanaticism had co-operated to raise." This expression, so unusually energetic for him, denotes how much he was disappointed by the failure of his exertions; and adds probability to Dr. Valpy's conjecture, that "after having been so surprisingly deserted by those whose rank and situation ought to have induced them to support him, he probably would not be encouraged to hazard another repulse." It was evident, indeed, from what had passed, that he could no longer reasonably expect to benefit religion in the manner he had recently proposed: if, therefore, the domestic affliction which shortly afterwards befell him had not interposed obstacles of another description, he still probably would have refrained from making any further attempt of a similar character, through what might almost have been considered the impossibility of success.

The circumstance which appears to have deceived Lord Sidmouth throughout the transaction, was his having received an impression from his earlier communications with leading members amongst the Dissenters, that his measure was more palatable to them than was

proved, by the result, to be the case.* His Lordship overrated the estimation which the Dissenters at large would attach to the regulation by which more respectability would have been added to the general body of their preachers and teachers, by the exclusion of persons notoriously disqualified to act in those capacities; and with the exception of this provision, the bill contained no other boon of sufficient importance to reconcile them to the agitation of questions in which, it must be admitted, both their feelings and interests were strongly engaged. Thus ended this fruitless attempt to alter the law respecting dissenting preachers; but in the following year, on the motion of Lord Liverpool, the several statutes relating to Dissenters were considerably relaxed. The 52d Geo. III. c. 155., which passed on the 29th of July, 1812, amongst other things, relieved Dissenters in general from taking the oaths and making the declaration required by the Toleration Act, and by the act of the 19th Geo. III. c. 44. Their preachers and teachers, however, might be called upon by a justice of the peace to take the

* That he did not adopt this opinion on insufficient grounds is evident from a MS. note which his Lordship has attached to a presentation copy of "A Sermon preached before the Annual Assembly of General Baptists, by John Evans, M.A." The Appendix gives some resolutions, strongly condemnatory of Lord Sidmouth's bill, and thanking Mr. William Smith, M.P., for his opposition to it, which were voted by a meeting of deputies of the three denominations of Dissenters, over which Mr. William Smith himself presided, on the 28th of May. Under the words, "W. Smith, chairman," his Lordship has written as follows:—"Mr. Smith repeatedly told me that the bill was so reasonable in its principle, and so just and moderate in its provisions, that he could not oppose it. *The clause relating to probationers was introduced at his suggestion.*"

oaths and make the declaration; but they could not be required to travel more than five miles from their own homes for that purpose. By the same statute, the Conventicle Act (22d Car. II. c. 1.) and two other acts relating to Quakers and Nonconformists, were repealed. The enacting words of this statute embraced *all Protestants* (the members of the Established Church being excepted by a subsequent proviso), and thus removed the objection urged by Dr. Adam Clarke against Lord Sidmouth's bill, but which objection seems equally to apply to the Toleration Act and the 19th Geo. III. A further alteration was made by the act 9th Geo. IV. c. 17., passed the 9th of May, 1828, by which so much of the Corporation and Test Acts (the 13th Car. II. stat. 2. c. 1., and the 25th Car. II. c. 2.) as required the persons therein named to take the sacrament, was repealed, and a declaration substituted in lieu thereof.

Lord Sidmouth's public services were now arrested by the occurrence of the most overwhelming bereavement to which a feeling and affectionate disposition can possibly be exposed. Early on the morning of Sunday, June the 23d, it pleased Divine Providence to remove to a happier existence his gentle, pious, and amiable wife; for nearly thirty years the solace of his domestic hours, the participator in all his joys and sorrows. Her Ladyship's indisposition is first mentioned in the correspondence for the month of April, where she is described as suffering "from restlessness, languor, and want of appetite;" but she rallied sufficiently in the following month to remove from Richmond Park to town, and to resume her intercourse with her family and friends; and it was not until

about a fortnight prior to the fatal result that very serious consequences were apprehended. To have "the desire of the eyes thus taken away with a stroke," is, under any circumstances, a most grievous affliction. But Lady Sidmouth possessed all those amiable qualifications the loss of which was most calculated to aggravate the weight of such a calamity to those who were destined to endure it. Although the world admired and lamented her, still it understood her not; for her meek and retiring graces were best adapted to domestic life, and it was in the endearing relations of wife, mother, and friend, that her piety and purity, her simplicity and gentleness, her tender and affectionate disposition, and the delicacy and refinement of her character, corresponding with her unusual personal attractions, revealed themselves to the loving and beloved objects of her attachment, and impressed her memory on their hearts in characters which have never been obliterated. As might have been expected from a man of his well-regulated and wisely-balanced disposition, Lord Sidmouth submitted to this dispensation with a calm and chastened sorrow, and his resignation was strikingly manifested in the letters in which he announced the sad event to his brother and Mr. Bathurst: — "The scene," he observed to the latter, "closed at half-past five this morning, when it pleased a gracious God to take to himself as pure a spirit, as, I believe, ever animated a perishable frame. My dear children had the sad comfort and the benefit of being present, and of witnessing a part of the effects and of the reward of a spotless life, in the tranquillity which attended the close of it. May such be their own latter end!"

The utmost consolation that affection could bestow was bountifully imparted on this occasion; and as the same letters which conveyed the sympathy of friends, confirm also the character which has been given of the deceased, a few extracts from them will here be presented.

Foremost in this, as in every duty of Christian charity and benevolence, were the Queen and the Princesses. Unhappily, the King remained in ignorance of an event in which he would have been one of the earliest to sympathise; but her Majesty graciously commanded Colonel Disbrowe to address a letter of inquiry to Lord Sidmouth, which his Lordship answered by requesting the Colonel "to offer to her Majesty, and also to the Princesses, the assurance of his humble gratitude for the benign consideration which her Majesty had condescended to manifest to his family and himself, under the heavy calamity with which it had pleased God to afflict them."

The Duke of Gloucester, also, was so obliging as to convey his sentiments of regret and condolence in the following most gratifying terms:—"The long and sincere friendship that has subsisted between us would naturally make me partake in any event that concerns you and yours; but having had the good fortune to pass so many happy hours in the interior of your family, I must on the present melancholy occasion feel peculiar concern, as *I well know the severity of the loss* you and your family have sustained."

"Alas," wrote the good Bishop of Gloucester, "for the sad event! In few, very few, have we seen combined to such a degree all the amiable qualities which adorn the female character; and no one, in thought

and action, was ever better prepared for the awful change. Thus much, in admiration, esteem, and friendship, I could not forbear expressing. But the sorrow is too deep for many words: your loss is my loss; your affliction is my affliction."

It will easily be imagined that the pen of Mr. Wilberforce, ever ready at the call of Christian sympathy, was not inactive at this period of trial and affliction. "Amidst all the anguish you feel," that good man observed, "and in the unfeigned concern which I myself experience, it is a solid comfort to me, and even to your lacerated mind it is the best balm that can be administered, to reflect that she whom you have lost was, as we have every reason to believe, prepared for the awful change. I have often been distressed how to address those I have loved, when they have lost their nearest relatives; but in this instance I have no embarrassment. I do believe Lady Sidmouth was a sincere humble Christian, looking to the mercy of God through her Redeemer, as her ground of hope. A purer spirit I have seldom known."

The Christian temper in which his Lordship submitted to this great bereavement, is indicated in the following letter addressed to Mr. Abbot on the next day after its occurrence: — "I thank you cordially for your truly kind sympathy. There is no refuge but in submission; and in that refuge there is not only support, but consolation. What may be the effect of this blow it is in vain to anticipate. Amongst them will not be found, I trust, a mistaken or a languid sense of my real duties. Of these I have always

endeavoured to take a just view, and to act up to it: when I have failed, the error has been in my judgment. By this principle my conduct will continue to be actuated; and I am convinced that when you reflect, as I know you kindly will, upon my present situation, we shall not differ about its application."

CHAPTER XXX.

1812, 1813.

Lord Sidmouth resumes his Interest in public Affairs. Communicates with Mr. Perceval on the Expiration of the restricted Regency. Accepts the Office of President of the Council. Assassination of Mr. Perceval. Negotiations for the Formation of a new Administration. Lord Liverpool becomes Premier. Lord Sidmouth accepts the Seals of the Home Department — Difficulties of that Position. Prevalence of Luddism — Origin of the Term. The Claims of the Roman Catholics no longer made a Cabinet Question. Letter from Sir Edward Pellew. Lord Sidmouth takes Measures to suppress Disturbances in Nottinghamshire. Moves Parliament to refer Papers on the Subject to a Secret Committee. Introduces a Bill for the Preservation of the public Peace. Letter from Major Scale. Luddites' Oath. Lord Sidmouth supports the Repeal of the Orders in Council. Letter of Lord Fitzwilliam. War declared by America. Disturbances at Sheffield. Letter from Colonel Lany. Mistaken Lenity shown by the Judge on former Occasions. General Election. Special Commission recommended by Lord Fitzwilliam. Lord Sidmouth to T. Babington, Esq. and Lord Eldon. Special Commission opened at York. Numerous Convictions. Severe but necessary Retribution — Salutary Effects of this Example. Military Protection diminished. Correspondence with Lord Fitzwilliam and General Maitland. Lord Sidmouth appointed Lord High Steward of Westminster. The Catholic Question. Episcopacy in India. Letters from Dr. A. Clarke, Lord Holland, Mr. Rufus King, Mr. Inglis, and Colonel Allan. Promotion of Dr. Howley to the See of London.

THE domestic affliction which Lord Sidmouth experienced did not very long deprive the public of

his services. He struggled against the first shock of his bereavement with a manly and Christian spirit, and sought for consolation in the constant society of his children, with whom, during the autumn, he visited nearly all his relations. The wound, however, was too severe and recent to be alleviated, even by sympathy and affection; and when he returned to Richmond Park in October, he "found the place still fraught with recollections alike unfavourable to composure by day and sleep at night. I feel," he observed to his brother, "that the soul of my worldly happiness is gone, and all I ask and pray for is that tranquillity of mind which may fit me for the discharge of real duties, and the society of those I value. * * * I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your most soothing and considerate letter. The feelings which it breathes have been a cordial to me through my various day, and are now the best that remains to me, that only excepted which nothing earthly gives, or can destroy." His attainment of the composure which he here desired is manifested in the next letter in the collection, which his Lordship addressed on the 3d of October to Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Pellew: — "Under circumstances," he said, "which have proved fatal to my domestic happiness, I have a heartfelt joy in the persuasion that the strength and spirit of this country will, humanly speaking, prove sufficient to enable it to maintain its high station in the world. It is my strong conviction, as it is my earnest wish, that you will have the glory of destroying the enemy's naval force in the Mediterranean. You well know that the

perfect confidence of your fleet is attached to your flag."

The reviving interest which his Lordship now began to take in public affairs was not unobserved by Mr. Perceval, who, when announcing to him on the 12th of December, that there was "no foundation for the rumours respecting intended changes of the administration," availed himself of the occasion to consult his Lordship respecting the "arrangements necessary previous to the expiration of the restricted regency." This mark of confidence was followed, upon the 23d of December, by the communication of the whole plan for the final settlement of the Regency question, which Lord Sidmouth returned on the following day, accompanied by a note expressing his high approbation "of the firm and temperate manner in which Mr. Perceval had conducted that most delicate and difficult business." The nature of this intercourse plainly intimated what were the minister's intentions, provided his own official existence should be prolonged. It was obvious, however, that no permanent arrangements could be made until after the approaching extension of the Regent's authority, when it was generally supposed that his Royal Highness would dismiss his present ministers, and place the government in the hands of the Whig party. No such change, however, took place; and Mr. Perceval, who remained at the head of the administration, immediately commenced his arrangements for the admission of Lord Sidmouth into the cabinet. The negotiation was completed without difficulty; for his Lordship, as Mr. Le Mesurier observed to him, "did not want so much of guard with this administration as with the

other. He would be associated with those who had acted under him when prime minister. He must therefore have weight with them, and had no occasion to apprehend the treatment which he had met with in 1805."

Lord Sidmouth received several letters from Mr. Perceval during the progress of the arrangement, which, with a single exception, are now only interesting as tending to show the confidence which prevailed between the parties. The excepted topic was the liberal opinions entertained by Lord Sidmouth respecting the licensing system; on which subject his Lordship expressed himself to Mr. Perceval, on the 15th of March, in the following terms: —

"P. S. On the American question I will not detain your messenger for the purpose of saying more than that I am satisfied that the opening of the ports of America ought to be the condition of the renunciation of our commerce, by licences, with the blockaded ports of the Continent."

In his reply, which was written on the same day, Mr. Perceval thus notices this important topic: —

"* * * Lord Castlereagh has found so much employment of a very pressing nature in his new office, that we have not yet been able to bring the American question on, for the purpose of settling our minds on the point which you feel so anxious about — I mean the opening the French blockade by licences. I trust, however, that a very few days now will give us a complete opportunity of bringing that point to a distinct settlement. In the mean time Lord Bathurst tells me, that the applications on the part of France for licences are multiplying. If in this state — not of abandoning, as it has been mistakenly supposed, the system of our orders in council, but of demonstrating their efficiency and accomplishing their object — we can bring ourselves to offer

to America the renunciation of our licences, undoubtedly we shall be making a greater sacrifice for accommodation than if these licences had never been granted."

The letter with which Mr. Perceval concluded this negotiation awakens a melancholy interest, as being the last which Lord Sidmouth ever received from that truly estimable and lamented statesman:—

"My dear Lord, Downing Street, April 7th, 1812.

"There will be a council to-morrow at Carlton House at two o'clock, when, if you will attend, you may be called to the president's chair.

"I enclose you a card for a cabinet dinner on that day. I hope you will be able to attend, as I wish much to take advantage of that meeting to settle our views with regard to the Dissenters' intended application to parliament. I should be glad to have the opportunity of some previous conversation with you upon the point; and if, therefore, you could call on me about one o'clock to-morrow, previous to the council, we might talk over this subject. * * * If it should be inconvenient for you to meet at dinner to-morrow, we must have a cabinet upon the subject the next morning. But cabinets on the day of an expected long debate are very inconvenient. I am, my dear Lord, yours most truly,

"Sp^R. Perceval."

Scarcely had Lord Sidmouth, after remaining five years in retirement, returned to the cabinet in the honourable position of President of the Council, when the earthly career of the friend by whom he had been recommended to the Regent for that situation, was cut short by the hand of an assassin. On the evening of the 11th of May, just as his Lordship had returned, as usual, to Richmond Park after the labours of his office, a messenger hastily recalled him to preside at the council, summoned for the examination of Bellingham, the perpetrator of that horrible act.

Personally, Lord Sidmouth took no part in the protracted negotiations for the re-construction of the government which followed Mr. Perceval's death. His sentiments at that conjuncture may best be inferred from the following letters to his brother; by which it appears that, as a member of the cabinet, he fully coincided in the views taken by his colleagues: —

"My dear Hiley, Charles Street, May 15th, 1812.

"The effects of the late act of atrocity have made it almost impossible for me to write till this moment. Never, I am confident, was there produced upon the inhabitants, *of all classes*, in the metropolis such an impression of horror, shame, grief, and indignation. * * * As to other points, I can only say that it is the wish of the Prince Regent to retain all his present servants, and that they will not desert him. They are perfectly united, and, I have no doubt, will act cordially together. My *belief* is, that Lord Liverpool will be at the head of the Treasury. Whether any, and what, auxiliary strength may be resorted to is uncertain. My determination is, as it has ever been, to make any sacrifice, but that of personal honour, by which an adequate degree of public benefit may be produced.

"Your affectionate S."

Five days after the date of the preceding letter, his Lordship informed the same party "that nothing was yet definitively settled; but that if the present cabinet should continue, they would fight the battle nearly as they were." This view, however, was disturbed on the 21st of May by Mr. Stewart Wortley's address, which was carried in the House of Commons by a small majority, praying the Regent "to take measures for forming a strong and efficient administration." To this circumstance Lord Sidmouth alluded in the following terms, when writing confidentially to his

brother, on the 23d: — "'Hic labor extremus,' and I think I may add, 'longarum hæc meta viarum.' The existence of the government was decided on Thursday night, and you will soon see a new arrangement, with Lord Wellesley at its head. How long it is likely to last it is in vain to conjecture. It will be long before the country finds a resting-place. Either of the chief parties in parliament, with the aid of the guerillas, in which it abounds, is strong enough to destroy but not to constitute, or at least uphold, a government. To me, personally, what has passed is a release and relief from what, at best, would have been irksome, and, under circumstances which might have occurred, almost intolerable; but I feel regret on account of others, particularly upon that of Bathurst, to whom a sphere of public duty, in all respects worthy of him, would at last have been opened. He would have succeeded Ryder, and I think it probable would have been Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; but this is mere conjecture." Lord Wellesley, to whom, as intimated in the preceding letter, the duty was intrusted by the Regent to form an administration, having failed in that attempt, a commission was next given to Lord Moira to communicate with the Lords Grenville and Grey on the composition of a new ministry; this negotiation, however, proved equally unsuccessful; the Regent, therefore, had no resource but to fall back upon his existing cabinet, which he consequently retained, with a few necessary modifications, and the important addition of Lord Sidmouth's devoted friend Mr. Vansittart, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the place of Mr. Perceval. Whilst these events were in progress, Lord Sidmouth, whose

conduct was such as to extract from Lord Eldon the friendly admission, that "he had certainly behaved very well," briefly informed his brother, on the 29th of May, that "every thing then remained unsettled. Each of the ministers," he added, "had an audience yesterday: mine lasted three quarters of an hour." On the 3d of June, as we learn through the same medium, "all still remained uncertain and in confusion;" and it was not until the 8th of the same month that the Regent appointed Lord Liverpool First Commissioner of the Treasury, and gave him authority to complete the other arrangements for forming an administration.

On that occasion the first words which his Lordship uttered after he returned from the audience to his colleagues were, "*You* must take the Home Department, Lord Sidmouth — it will be every thing to me."

The duties of the office to which Lord Sidmouth was thus unexpectedly called, were at that period peculiarly difficult and important. The stagnation of trade had deprived a large proportion of the manufacturing population of the kingdom of their usual amount of employment. This had produced, in numerous instances, that discontented spirit upon which the instigators of turbulence and disaffection are enabled most successfully to work, and, unhappily, enough of the old leaven of the French revolution still remained in the land, to supply agents for such mischievous purposes. The consequence was, not only that Lord Sidmouth on entering upon his duties found serious disturbances existing in several quarters, but that also, during the remainder of his official career,

he had to maintain a ceaseless struggle against the overt attempts or secret encroachments of anarchy, disloyalty, and sedition. For ten years, indeed, of almost unexampled excitement in the field of domestic politics, he lived in a perpetual storm, during which he exhibited wisdom and moral courage of the highest order. This was a situation for which the persevering energy and unflinching firmness of his character were peculiarly adapted. Under his vigilant superintendence every attempt to create disturbance, and to clog the wheels of government, was immediately repressed, and no sooner did sedition any where raise its head than it was crushed. It will readily be imagined that when this vigour of administration, which present circumstances so called forth as to make it appear to the public as a new feature in his character, was first displayed, it exposed him to frequent attacks and accusations; but these he either calmly disregarded, or repelled in the spirit of conscious rectitude. To this uncompromising course of public duty he was encouraged by the gracious confidence of the Regent, and the respect and support of his colleagues, the more experienced of whom were his contemporaries, and the remainder he had himself, when prime minister, first introduced to public life. Thus surrounded by friends, and restored to that political position which his merits and experience entitled him to assume, his Lordship was enabled again to serve his King and country not less beneficially than he had formerly done in a still higher capacity.* In recording, how-

* Lord Sidmouth's sentiments no longer remained unsupported in his official position, for his faithful friend, Mr. Vansittart, presided over the Exchequer; Mr. Bathurst received the seals of the

ever, his Lordship's services during this important period, it is desirable to confine our attention chiefly to those proceedings for which he was officially responsible, especially to the firm resistance he offered to all attempts to invade the legitimate dominion of the constituted authorities. On such occasions, wherever the case was clear, he employed the law to vindicate its own majesty: in other instances, where this was impracticable, he hesitated not to apply to the legislature for the necessary powers to put down evils against which the existing laws provided no adequate remedy. At the time when Lord Sidmouth assumed the responsibility of curbing this anarchical spirit, it had already been several months in operation throughout the manufacturing districts. In the town and county of Nottingham, especially, it had manifested itself to such an extent, under the appellation of Luddism*, that, at the commencement of the session of 1812, parliament had found it necessary to pass two

Duchy of Lancaster, with a seat in the cabinet; and on Mr. Goulburn's removing into the Colonial Office, at Lord Bathurst's request, Mr. Hiley Addington was appointed Under Secretary of State for the Home Department.

* The term Luddite was at first only given to those who broke stocking frames in the disturbed midland counties, but was afterwards extended to all who entered into associations for the destruction of machinery, or for any other unlawful purpose. The name originated in the following circumstance:—In a village in Leicestershire there lived, about the year 1779, a person of weak intellect, named Ned Lud, who was the common object of ridicule and attack to mischievous boys. Being one day peculiarly irritated by his tormentors, he pursued one of them into a house, where, being unable to find the urchin, he broke, in his rage, two stocking frames which were on the premises; and hence, afterwards, whenever any frames were broken, it was said that Lud had been there.

acts, the operation of which was limited to two years, one constituting the crime of frame-breaking a capital offence, the other for securing the preservation of the peace throughout the kingdom. The debate in the House of Lords, on that occasion, afforded Lord Byron an opportunity of making his first speech in parliament, in opposition to the government measures, which, however, were carried by a considerable majority. Such was the state of the kingdom when Lord Sidmouth received the congratulations of his friends on assuming the superintendence of its domestic affairs. Several of his Lordship's correspondents on that occasion alluded with approbation to the system, now first adopted, of not considering the claims of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects a government question. "Mr. Perceval," as was observed by Mr. Lee, though he "gained some friends, certainly created some enemies, by making his a no-popery administration; but the present cabinet, by leaving the question to the unbiassed opinion of the public voice, freed itself from many political enemies it would otherwise have excited." Whilst this was the opinion of one correspondent, another, the Rev. R. Churton, when congratulating his Lordship on the majority of 125 in the division on the Catholic petition, in the House of Commons, lamented "the circumstance mentioned by Lord Castlereagh, that 'it was not a principle with the renewed government to oppose collectively the discussion of the Roman Catholic question' as a circumstance truly alarming." There are many other letters expressing the sentiments of Lord Sidmouth's friends at this important crisis, for which, however interesting, it is impossible

to find room. From these the following has been selected as a representation of the remainder: —

"Caledonia, off Toulon, June 23d, 1812.

"My dear Lord,

"I cannot permit a despatch to sail without offering you my sincere congratulations on your appointment to the home department, which I learn from the French papers, having received no news from England for ten weeks. We live, my dear Lord, in eventful times. Twenty years ago public opinion overturned the world. The period is very fast approaching when this same weapon will work the peace of mankind, and the downfall of a tyrant, by crushing the base fabric which has been raised on the ruins of thrones without other support than that which is derived from power. The happiness of nations and the welfare of mankind have been forgotten. But I think the time is come when the people, awakened from their sleep, will be roused to revenge their insults and their wrongs. All this quarter of the world is on the point of breaking out. The spark has burst in Dalmatia, and will soon spread over the south of Europe; and I hope to close my services by stripping the flag of this despot from the mast-heads of his fleet, and laying them at the feet of our gracious Prince. This would sweeten the years of age, and be ample reward for a long life of toil and danger in the service of my country and the cause of suffering humanity. I trust, amidst all the contentions of party, our Prince will find safety and support in the hearts of loyal Britons, among the first of whom the country hails your Lordship's name.

"I am, my dear Lord, with sentiments of the highest respect and sincere esteem, your truly devoted friend and servant,

"EDWARD PELLEW."

The earliest duties which Lord Sidmouth had to fulfil in his new office related to the organized system of rebellion already alluded to. This had now spread over the extensive and populous tracts of the Lancashire and Cheshire cotton manufacture and the

clothing part of the West Riding of Yorkshire. During the early part of the summer numerous acts of lawless outrage were perpetrated, and the rioters appear to have adopted a system of organization highly dangerous to the public peace, and which manifested itself in a species of military training accompanied by the seizure of arms and the administration of illegal oaths. "These disorders," as Mr. Wilberforce observed in parliament, "were evidently of a political nature, arising from certain mischievous publications industriously circulated to alienate the affections of the people from the laws and government of their country."

Under such circumstances the attention of parliament was directed to the subject by a message from the Regent, to which Lord Sidmouth moved a dutiful answer on the 29th of June. His Lordship then proposed that a secret Committee should be appointed, consisting of eleven peers, to whom certain papers describing the nature of the outrages committed, including the murder of Mr. Horsfall, the destruction of valuable mills at Huddersfield, and other lawless proceedings, might be referred. The example of the Upper House was followed in the Lower, and in a few days both Committees published their reports, which comprised an awful catalogue of crimes, and fully established the fact of an extensive military organization. Upon this evidence, Lord Sidmouth introduced a bill into the House of Lords on the 23d of July, "for the preservation of the public peace in the disturbed districts, and giving additional powers to the justices for that purpose." The bill passed

both Houses, and its operation was limited to the 25th of March, 1813.

The form of the secret oath, which was published in the report of the House of Lords, was communicated to Lord Sidmouth by Major Seale, commandant of the South Devon militia quartered at Sheffield, in the following letter:—

"My Lord, June 30th, 1812.

"I feel it to be my duty to make the government acquainted with the accompanying information, which I received this day from a person whom I believe to be intelligent and worthy of confidence. His deposition is, 'that the form of oath enclosed* has been administered to a vast number of people; that they act in concert, by the means of delegates, all the way from Glasgow to London; that these delegates are supported by a salary; that they alone meet in committees and concert plans; that these committees are held in various parts of the country; that their intention at present is, when the scheme is sufficiently ripe, to raise a few partial disturbances in this part of the country, to draw off as many troops as possible from the metropolis, and that then the great rising will take place there; that their communication to each other will be by the firing of guns at certain distances; that they are already in possession of a considerable number of arms; that they have numerous recruiting parties out; but that this oath is administered by individuals, from one friend to another, and not in bodies, and that it is at this moment going on; that the spirit has by no means been checked by the repeal of the orders in council or any recent measures.' The person is fearful of having his name known, for he says his life would be the penalty; and though he could, perhaps, inform of some individuals who may have taken the oath, he conceives it would be of little benefit unless the ringleaders were apprehended; which might be

* This was merely an oath not to betray an accomplice, and to put to death any fellow-conspirator who might do so.

done by persons gaining admittance to their meetings with the signs which he has furnished. He added, 'that there is a fund from which the delegates and other expenses are paid; and that there are delegates in Sheffield and Barnsley.'"

It cannot be questioned that this extensive organization was effected by parties influenced by seditious and disloyal motives. Doubtless, however, their power of doing mischief was increased by the distress amongst the lower classes of manufacturers occasioned by the orders in council of 1807 and 1809, which, by impeding the operations of commerce, had deprived the manufacturing population of the kingdom of one of its usual sources of employment. It was of little moment, indeed, to Lord Sidmouth, in the fulfilment of his executive functions, from what cause this treasonable spirit originated, since in every case it was equally his duty, if possible, to put it down. He, however, strongly disapproved of the orders in council, as regarded their application to the United States of America, and had actually made their revocation a subject of negotiation with Mr. Perceval on his acceptance of office. No doubt, therefore, his Lordship's counsels contributed much to the judicious concession of that question which the government made to Mr. Brougham's very able exertions on the 16th of June. On this subject he received a letter from Earl Fitzwilliam, dated June 19th, which, after communicating intelligence of fresh outrages committed in Yorkshire, proceeds in the following terms:—

"I confess my anxiety is greatly increased by what passed in our House last night relative to the orders in council. If they are to be rescinded, subject to all the conditions and provisions then pointed out, the measure will avail nothing

for the *present* year. Not a merchant will risk a bale of goods under these circumstances: I said so, in the House, at the request of the parties concerned. I was called out, and pressed to state their opinion; that the House and that government might not entertain an erroneous opinion on this important subject: whereas, make the revocation peremptory, and, on the faith of the Act of Congress, the petitioners will ship off twelve millions of manufacture in the course of a week.* Let this be done, and immediately the manufacturer will be set to work again; industrious and peaceable habits will instantly revive; outrage and conspiracy will die away: be assured they are the offspring of distress and want of employment. I do not mean to say that not a single mischievous spirit will exist; but that the influence and lead of such people will be at an end: it is fostered and rendered formidable by nothing but the want of trade. Put your merchant into immediate activity; that will do more to tranquillise the country than all the activity and zeal of magistrates, deputy lieutenants, and the army combined."

The view taken in the preceding letter of the origin of these disturbances proved in the sequel too favourable to the parties engaged in them; but Lord Fitzwilliam was connected with those who had always disapproved of the orders in council, and it was natural, therefore, that he should attribute to that cause more importance than really belonged to it.

In his speech, on the 29th of June, Lord Sidmouth, with more correctness, attributed the disturbances to the combined influence of political agitation and want of employment. "Although," he observed, "the conduct of the rioters might be, in some degree,

* It was fortunate for these merchants that the measure was not framed in the manner they desired, or their twelve millions' worth of goods would have fallen into an enemy's hand; for on the very day of the debate alluded to by Lord Fitzwilliam, the congress declared war against Great Britain.

traced to the high price of provisions and the reduction of work; still there was no doubt that these outrages were fomented by persons who had views and objects which it was the duty of government to counteract."

The next letter, dated "Milton, July 13th," which Lord Sidmouth received from Earl Fitzwilliam, thus described the advantages already resulting from the vigorous measures adopted by government for the suppression of the disturbances: —

"My Lord,

"The private letters which I have lately received from Yorkshire have been very satisfactory, as they have not reported one act of outrage, nor expressed any suspicion of nocturnal meetings for training or other dangerous purposes.

"By returns received this morning from the two disturbed districts of Morley and Agbrig, it appears that nearly all the towns and villages have sworn in a sufficient number of special constables; and are, besides, forming associations for the preservation of the peace — a proof that the peaceable inhabitants are not afraid of declaring themselves — a state of things very different from that which lately existed. I trouble your Lordship with this, to have the satisfaction of communicating this improved state of the country; and also to convey an inquiry, made by the lieutenancy, what reward government would give for information which led to the conviction of offenders. * * * Certainly it is most desirable to show that, sooner or later, the perpetrators of violent outrages are detected: a contrary example will be very mischievous. Moreover, the detection of some of the instruments will probably lead to the knowledge of the ringleaders — a discovery anxiously to be wished, as tending to guarantee future tranquillity. I am, &c. &c.

"WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM."

Unfortunately, the lull described in this too sanguine letter was only temporary, and on the 18th of

the following month the storm broke out at Sheffield with more violence than ever. The transactions, at which both Lord Fitzwilliam and his son, Lord Milton, were present, are particularly described in letters addressed by Lieutenant-Colonel Lany, of the East Devon militia, to his colonel, Lord Rolle, and by Mr. W. Cole, adjutant of the same regiment, to Lord Sidmouth; from the former of which the following extracts are made: —

"Sheffield, June 19th.

"Yesterday, being market day, an immense mob, principally women, assembled; and by a sudden rush emptied the market, in a few minutes, of all it contained. They next proceeded to all the shops where flour was sold, demanding flour at 3*s.* per stone, which had been selling, during the last fortnight, for 7*s.*; and, with only five or six exceptions, succeeded, by intimidation, in obtaining all they contained at that price. The 15th hussars and ourselves have been constantly on duty since yesterday morning. I am sorry to say these lawless proceedings continue to-day; and parties are gone into the country to attack the mills; but are followed by dragoons. Not a mechanic has been at work yesterday or to-day; though there is no want of employment. The Riot Act has just been read to at least 5000, and Lord Fitzwilliam gave them five minutes to disperse, when, as they did not obey, the hussars charged down the street and cleared it immediately. We now have orders to fire if we meet with the least resistance. Thousands were added to-day to their numbers from the country. Lord Milton was here yesterday: he is very unpopular, and stones were flung at him. Nine o'clock. — Lord Fitzwilliam, who appears very determined, left this place an hour ago; and I hope this troublesome business may end without our having recourse to fire. No lives have, as yet, been lost."

It would, probably, have been mercy, eventually, if these insurrectionary proceedings had been sup-

pressed with more severity at the outset. But the exemplary forbearance of the troops, and the misplaced lenity of the learned Judge at the preceding spring assizes at Nottingham, in assigning light punishments to the convicted rioters, and in regarding them as trivial offenders, encouraged the disaffected to more daring atrocities, and rendered an awful severity of retribution eventually necessary.

The election of a new parliament, which occupied the month of October, appears to have suspended the proceedings of the factious. The respite, however, was but momentary; for on the 7th of the following month Lord Sidmouth informed Earl Fitzwilliam that "he entirely concurred in his Lordship's and Lieutenant-General Maitland's opinions, of the urgent expediency of accelerating, as much as possible, the trial of the prisoners of a certain description then confined in York Castle, with the view of affording that degree of security which might be expected to arise to the inhabitants of the disturbed districts from their conviction and punishment. The cases of those persons," he added, "were then under consideration of the law officers of the Crown; and if there should, in their judgment, be, at that time, such a probability of conviction as to render it prudent to proceed to trial, a special commission would be immediately issued for that purpose."

By these prompt and vigorous measures, his Lordship carried into practice his favourite opinion, that the immediate suppression of turbulent proceedings by the strong arm of authority is not more essential to the interests of society than to those of the offenders themselves; and this principle he explained in the

following extract from a letter, which he addressed, on the 13th of November, to Mr. Thomas Babington, M.P. for Leicester: — "Your account of the discharge of workmen and the price of grain at Leicester gave me much concern. Corn must be expected to continue dear; a painful consideration after the sanguine hopes which had been raised. The foreign demand for some branches of our manufactures is also likely, I fear, to remain very limited; and, under these circumstances, there must unhappily be a considerable degree of suffering, and, consequently, of irritation amongst the people. Those are their real and wisest friends who adopt the most effectual means to prevent or suppress tumults, whilst they manifest a sincere sympathy in their distress, and use their best endeavours to relieve it. But man cannot create abundance where Providence has inflicted scarcity."

The law officers of the crown having forwarded their opinion on the 12th of November, Lord Sidmouth immediately applied for the Lord Chancellor's sanction to the measures recommended therein in the following letter: —

"My dear Lord, Whitehall, Nov. 13th, 1812.

"You have probably seen the letters from Lord Fitzwilliam and General Maitland, strongly urging the immediate trials of such of the persons, committed to York Castle, as there is a probability of convicting. The depositions in those cases have, for some time, been under the consideration of the law officers, from whom I received, yesterday, the enclosed report, which I have shown to Lord Liverpool, who approves of both the measures suggested; namely, that of issuing a special commission, and that of sending an intelligent person from London for the purposes stated in the report. The

person intended for this mission is Mr. Henry Hobhouse. The mode of carrying into effect the measure of a special commission must be the subject of much discussion; but I wish to be enabled to inform Lord Fitzwilliam, without delay, that a commission will be issued at an early period.

"I am, &c. &c. SIDMOUTH."

It appears, from the Chancellor's reply, that his Lordship was much embarrassed in deciding what judges to place on the commission; but the selection at last rested on Baron Thompson and Mr. Justice Le Blanc, who, on the 2d of January, proceeded to York, in fulfilment of their arduous duty. Meanwhile Mr. Hobhouse was engaged at Huddersfield and Wakefield in investigating the evidence and in selecting those cases for trial which were most likely to result in conviction; and this labour he effected with so much ability and success, that against almost every accused person who was put upon his trial a verdict of guilty was returned.

A clue also had at length been obtained to that atrocious combination by which Mr. Horsfall, an eminent manufacturer of Huddersfield, had been marked out for destruction, and actually shot to death on the high road in full daylight, in the presence of several expectant witnesses; and the three parties to whom this bloody office had been assigned were tried and condemned for the murder.

A sufficiency of convictions having thus been obtained to vindicate the supremacy of the law, on the 7th of January, Mr. Park, the leading counsel for the prosecution, announced an intention on behalf of the Crown not to proceed with the remaining cases. It now, therefore, became the duty of the government to

inflict that extensive retribution which the heinousness of the offences, the necessity for a striking example, and the mistaken lenity manifested at a previous assize, had rendered indispensable; and from this duty, painful as it was, Lord Sidmouth did not shrink.

The three murderers expiated their crime at York, on the 9th of January; and on the 16th of the same month fourteen unhappy Luddites, whose cases were considered the most atrocious and unpardonable of the many committed for trial, were also led to execution — half at eleven in the forenoon, and the remaining seven after an interval of two hours. Lord Sidmouth was highly satisfied with the conduct of all the authorities whose services were required on this occasion. The two learned judges who presided not only fulfilled their duties with exemplary firmness, but also explained the law on the subject with such clearness and ability, that it was considered advisable to publish, from authority, a full report of their charges.* Mr. Park, subsequently made one of the justices of the Court of Common Pleas, as Lord Sidmouth assured Lord Kenyon, "conducted all the government prosecutions with so much zeal and ability, that he had recommended him on more than one occasion to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Liverpool, and Lord Ellenborough." And his Lordship so much approved of Mr. Henry Hobhouse's services, that he eventually appointed him Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, and regarded him ever afterwards with unabated confidence and friendship.

To Lieutenant-General Maitland, who was shortly

* These trials are published at length in Howell's edition of "State Trials," vol. xxxi. p. 959.

afterwards appointed to the government of Malta, his Lordship, on the 13th of January, expressed his approbation in the following terms: — "I have to thank you for your letter of the 11th. Lord Ellenborough was with me when the post arrived, and expressed his satisfaction in the strongest terms at all the proceedings which had taken place at York. Every thing, indeed, appeared to have been done with great judgment, and I confidently anticipate the happiest effects in various parts of the kingdom."

These severe, but necessary examples, produced a most salutary result in the discontented districts; and it was remarked in the leading register* of the period, that "few years had passed in which more internal public tranquillity had been enjoyed by the people of these islands than the year 1813." It attributes much of this quiet and submission to the "vigorous exertions made for the suppression of these internal disorders, which had arisen to so alarming a height in the previous year, and had rendered necessary some unusual measures of restraint and severity." The withdrawing military protection from the disaffected counties, was the earliest result of these vigorous proceedings. This step Lord Sidmouth announced to General Maitland, on the 16th of January, in the following terms: — "I am satisfied the time is arrived when the experiment ought to be tried of leaving the country to itself, and of suspending, at least, all military interference. The mode of effecting this change, so that the timid and inert may cease to place their chief

* Annual Register, vol. lv. p. 98.

reliance on the protection of the troops, and yet so that early assistance may be afforded in case of emergency, must be left to your discretion, in the exercise of which you may be assured of the firm support of government upon this as upon every other occasion. I saw Mr. Park yesterday, and have just parted with Hobhouse: both have acquitted themselves with great judgment and ability."

On the 2d of February his Lordship sent to the same party "a copy of a proclamation issued on the preceding day, of which, he hoped, he would approve."

The instrument here alluded to was directed against "the daring outrages recently committed in the manufacturing districts, which it attributed to ill-designing persons deluding the ignorant and unwary, by their wicked artifices and misrepresentations, and seducing them to enter into unlawful associations, and bind their consciences by mischievous oaths and engagements." The Regent is then made to "exhort all his Majesty's subjects to exert themselves in preventing the recurrence of these atrocious crimes, and to warn those who may be exposed to the machinations of secret directors, of the danger and wickedness of such advice." The proclamation next recommends to proprietors of machinery to persevere in its use, and to trust to the salutary measures provided by parliament for their protection; and it concludes by commanding all magistrates and other civil functionaries to use their utmost diligence to prevent the renewal of the recent unlawful proceedings; and, by declaring the firm resolution of his Royal Highness's government strictly to enforce the law, should a repetition

of the late atrocities call for the infliction of just and exemplary punishment.

Lord Sidmouth had selected the period for issuing this proclamation, with reference to an intimation which he had given to Lord Fitzwilliam on the 25th of January, that it was the intention of government "to diminish, in a short time, the aggregate amount of the force lately employed in the county of York." In the same letter he remarked to his Lordship, that "the utmost degree of vigilance would, under such circumstances, be indispensably necessary on the part of those who were invested with civil power and authority." In consequence of this letter, Lord Fitzwilliam convened a general meeting of magistrates at Wakefield on the 4th of February, the result of which he communicated to Lord Sidmouth three days afterwards:—

"The meeting," his Lordship stated, "was well attended by those magistrates who act in the lately disturbed parts of the West Riding. The occasion furnished me the opportunity of ascertaining the present temper of the inhabitants; and it is with great satisfaction that I have to convey the opinion of those magistrates best enabled to form well-grounded opinions, that the country is fast subsiding into a state of temper which promises that no further outrage will disturb the public tranquillity. It appeared to be the general opinion, that the moving detachments of military might safely be dispensed with, and none employed except in the great towns. The magistrates also reported that the system of association for defence, which had been recommended by the lieutenancy, had been generally carried into effect by the townships.

"The meeting passed a resolution approving of what had been already done in this respect, and earnestly recommending perseverance in the same system. I trust, therefore, that

the police of the country is fast reverting into its proper channel; and that the civil power is resuming a strength that will be, as it ought to be, the only guardian of the lives and properties of the peaceable inhabitants. I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

"WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM."

Lord Sidmouth had at the same time the satisfaction of receiving a similar communication from Lieutenant-General Maitland, whose share in producing such results his Lordship immediately acknowledged in the following grateful terms: — "To this most desirable and important change you have eminently contributed; and such is the opinion of every member of his Majesty's government." His Lordship's approbation of the conduct of the civil authorities is sufficiently implied in the subjoined reply, which he addressed to Lord Fitzwilliam on the 9th of February:

"My Lord,

"I have been honoured with your Lordship's letter of the 7th of February, accompanied by a copy of the resolutions agreed to by a meeting of magistrates held at Wakefield on the 4th, which are an honourable tribute to the meritorious services of those to whom they refer. Your Lordship appears to have adopted the most judicious and effectual course of proceeding, for the accomplishment of the wishes of his Majesty's government, under the change of circumstances which had recently taken place in the West Riding of the county of York. It is highly satisfactory to be assured, by the opinion of your Lordship and of the magistrates who attended the meeting, that the improved temper of the inhabitants of that quarter affords the most favourable prospect of the complete re-establishment of the public peace and tranquillity; to which nothing can more effectually contribute than the association of well-disposed individuals, under

the sanction of the laws, for the protection of persons and property. It is most ardently to be wished, and, I trust, now to be reasonably expected, that the civil power will re-assume its strength and authority, and that the painful necessity may not again arise of resorting to military aid for its support. I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

"SIDMOUTH."

Disaffection was now silenced, though, unhappily, not subdued; advantage, however, will be taken of this pause in the storm briefly to extract a few particulars from the miscellaneous portion of the correspondence.

The cheerful view which Lord Sidmouth now took of public affairs, both at home and abroad, is fully explained in the following observations, which his Lordship addressed to Sir Edward Pellew on the 17th of March: —

"A cloud, for a short period, somewhat darkened our prospects in Spain; but, upon the whole, the present state of things, at home and abroad, is animating and encouraging to the greatest degree. I say, at home; for you may rest assured that the people are sound and firm. A most material and happy change, produced by various causes, has taken place in their temper and disposition within the last few months; of which almost every post brings proofs, even from those quarters where the spirit of insubordination and tumult was most prevalent. Still, however, vigilance and promptitude are and ever must be necessary. On the events in the north of Europe, and on the impulse which they have already given to the inhabitants of countries which appeared to be in a state of hopeless prostration, I cordially congratulate you. Italy, I am confident, will be roused; and the Tyrol and Switzerland will, I trust, again come forward with the brightest prospects, weakened as their enemy is, and powerfully pressed upon from almost every quarter. Still he

will make great efforts; and if those of the powers opposed to him are not simultaneous, he will again have the benefit of contending with them in detail. It is unnecessary for me to assure you that you possess the confidence of the Admiralty and of the government in as full and perfect a degree as it is possible for you to desire. Of this you must have been long since convinced, not only from the official correspondence of the Board of Admiralty, but from the private letters of Lord Melville. May a spirit of rashness, similar to that which led Bonaparte to Moscow, send his fleet out of Toulon; and, in that case, we may confidently expect that it will be as completely annihilated as his army."

At this period Lord Sidmouth had the satisfaction to receive from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster an appointment to the honourable office of "Lord High Steward, or chief magistrate of that city and liberty," vacated by the death of the Marquis of Buckingham. The congratulatory address of "the two chief burgesses, burgesses, assistant burgesses, high bailiff, and other officers, on his occupation of an office which the most noble personages had, at all times, thought worthy their acceptance, bears date the 22d of April, and expresses "their hope that they may long enjoy his Lordship's protection and assistance in the execution of their duties in the government of the city, as established in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by whom the court of burgesses was instituted, and the great Burleigh appointed to the office of Lord High Steward."

In the session of 1813 a bill for removing the disabilities of his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects was submitted to parliament by Mr. Grattan, with apparently a better prospect of success than on any previous occasion. A corresponding anxiety was thereby

excited amongst the whole Protestant community throughout the empire, which manifested itself in numerous petitions against the contemplated concession. Nevertheless, on the 2d of March, Mr. Grattan carried his motion for a committee on the subject by a majority of forty; nor did he fail in maintaining the same advantage through the various stages of the bill, until its committal on the 24th of May, when the influence of the Speaker, Mr. Abbot, who made a speech on the occasion which was greatly admired, obtained the rejection of the clause empowering Catholics to sit and vote in either house of parliament — an alteration which led to the immediate abandonment of the whole measure. During the progress of these discussions, Lord Sidmouth received various communications on the subject, from which the following letter, containing the sentiments of Dr. Adam Clarke, has been selected for insertion: —

"My Lord, Harpur Street, March 30th, 1813.

"I have the honour of presenting to your Lordship a farther continuation of my work, accompanied with the same sentiments of high respect as the preceding parts; and it is not a small satisfaction to me to have this humble means of engaging a small portion of your Lordship's attention. * * * There is another subject, my Lord, of infinitely greater consequence, in which I feel myself proportionably interested; and which, with my views, if it were requisite, I would present, on my knees, at the feet of his Majesty's government — I mean, my Lord, the subject of the *Roman Catholic Claims*. A more momentous era than the present, nor one more pregnant with great events to the empire of Britain, never perhaps existed. I have the honour to know your Lordship's affection and zeal for the Protestant religion and for the Established Church; and I venerate and applaud your Lordship's feelings. As a Protestant — though not born an English-

man, yet bred up in the bosom of the Established Church — I also have my humble share in the same sentiments. In observing the progress of this momentous question in the lower House, I am struck with astonishment and am filled with alarm; because I feel deeply for the safety of the nation, the existence of the Protestant religion, and the preservation of the Church of England. To me all appears to be at stake. A political frenzy seems to have gone abroad on this subject; and by it the voice of *religion* and *prudent* caution is not heard. Born and bred up in the midst of the Irish papists, and having had constant intercourse with my native country for upwards of thirty years since I left it, I well know the *spirit of popery*. Its intolerant damnatory principles necessarily produce intolerance and cruelty in the bosom of its adherents. Every opinion contrary to its own is 'damnable heresy, finally destructive to the souls that hold it, and should not, cannot be tolerated. Those, therefore, who will not conform, should be extirpated, that they may not corrupt others.' This, my Lord, is the spirit of popery; nor can this spirit ever be changed till the maxims on which it is founded be changed; for as necessarily as a *cause* produces a corresponding *effect*, so necessarily must the doctrines of popery produce intolerance and cruelty. The talk of the amelioration of the spirit of the papists is, in my opinion, absurd and self-refuting, while they exult in maintaining the *same principles*, which they acknowledge to be *vital* to their communion and *invariable;* and which, it would be easy to demonstrate, necessarily impel every papist to abhor and detest Protestantism in all its forms, and to use his utmost endeavours for its destruction and annihilation. And shall the power, the sword, and the religion of the state be again entrusted to such hands? Μη γενοιτο! My Lord, the great God of heaven has placed your Lordship in the breach: may his wisdom and power direct and strengthen you to maintain your post! and may all the other high branches of the administration labour with your Lordship, and be triumphant in their work! Every man, to whom the Protestant faith is no indifferent thing, should feel interested here; for although it is likely, should popery again get the ascendency in this

nation, that its extirpating zeal will first be directed against the *sectaries*, yet, my Lord, it will not terminate *there*: the Catholic church can brook no *competitor*; the *English hierarchy* must next come down, that popery may be all in all. Let none deem himself safe while his neighbour's house is on fire,—

> 'Vulcano superante domos, jam proximus ardet
> Ucalegon.'

"It is not my province to meddle with politics. Little as I may understand the subject, in all its depths, as a science, in the present case I could easily prove that it is an awful political delusion that the state will be strengthened by admitting the Roman Catholics to political power. It is notorious to the loyal and well-affected people of Ireland, that multitudes of the papists are so disaffected towards this country, that nothing can reconcile them but a radical change of opinions on *their side* or *ours*. On their side, this change can never be brought about by granting their claims. No sort of good, but much evil, has resulted from their possessing *the elective franchise*; although they declared, at the time, it was all that they wanted. At the present, they carefully suppress their late-avowed sentiments in their *public boards*; but how long will these sentiments lie concealed if their claims be conceded? I was in Dublin last July at the time of their *aggregate meeting*; and the sentiments tumultuously avowed there were horrible! I firmly believe that nothing but *political* and *ecclesiastical* ascendency will satisfy them; and most likely a separation from England will be the result of their acquiring power. I can assure your Lordship that the loyal part of Ireland is deeply wounded by the present measures; and the bonds of Protestant attachment are likely to be greatly loosened, if the enormous claims of the Roman Catholic be conceded. Should this take place, the destruction of the Protestant ascendency and the degradation of the British people will, I fear, be the ultimate result. My Lord, it would ill become *me* to plead for the continuance of any encumbrances on religious opinion or religious worship. I know not *one* under which the Roman Catholic labours, either in this country or in Ireland. If there be any, my

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heart says, Let every Roman Catholic have the freest, fullest toleration to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience and the prescriptions of his religion; but, my Lord, let them never again have it in their power to add another human spirit to the noble army of martyrs. In contemplating a very thick cloud of most destructive evils which a concession of these claims must necessarily produce, my heart feels confidence in your Lordship's influence and exertions. Should all be lost in the Lower House, surely the rod of God, the rod of Moses and Aaron, is still in the hands of the peers and prelates of the nation: and, in this cause, I am sure the great majority of the British and Irish people would cheerfully and strenuously co-operate. Should their Lordships, in their juridical capacity, be the instruments of opposing the constitutional barrier to those dangerous demands, millions of Protestants will give thanks to their Maker for the existence of a House of Lords. Pardon, my Lord, this intrusion. With sentiments of the highest respect for your Lordship, and with the most fervent prayers for the preservation of the Church and the safety of the State, I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,

"ADAM CLARKE."

That his Lordship's own sentiments had undergone no fluctuations on this subject is evident from the following expression of them, which he addressed some months afterwards to Viscount Jocelyn: — "The emancipation of which your Lordship's ill-fated but noble country stands in need, is emancipation from ignorance, poverty, and bigotry. The word, in the sense in which it is now too commonly used, is delusive, and purposely and studiously so; and the measure which it professes to indicate and describe would not even palliate the evils which exist, but, as I am firmly convinced, would add to them others, the most calamitous to Ireland and the whole empire."

One of the proceedings of the government in 1813, in which Lord Sidmouth took especial interest, was the establishment of Episcopacy in India. The correspondence contains numerous complaints of the culpable postponement of this vitally important measure, from which the following is selected, as an index of the feeling wherewith the heads of our church regarded that lamentable neglect of the spiritual interests of its colonies, which, until that period, had been characteristic of the British empire.

"On the commercial concerns of India," wrote Bishop Huntingford on the 17th of April, "I say nothing; but for the proposition to send a bishop and archdeacons to India I am much interested. It is deplorable, perhaps disgraceful, to us as rational beings, culpable in us as Christians, that we have *but three places* of public worship provided for our fellow-subjects in India. Who can wonder that the moral and religious principles which our young men may have carried hence, should gradually decay for want of being cherished and invigorated by habitual worship and instruction on the Sabbath? Such is the analogy between body and mind, that, without aliment frequently supplied, the principles of mind will as certainly be weakened as the strength of body will be debilitated.

"But I argue also in a political way. America had never been lost if an Episcopal Church had long ago been established there; and I am persuaded now, the strongest means through which you can secure any degree of real attachment to this country will be through the Episcopalians. Who shall say that a spirit of revolt may never reach India? may never reach Botany Bay? In my discourse before the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,' I made allusion to the policy of securing the affections of the rising generations in New South Wales, by establishing an Episcopal Church, before separatists had prejudiced their minds against our constitution, civil and religious. On the

same grounds of policy an Episcopal Church establishment seems essential in India." *

* As the indifference here stated to have been shown by the chief colonising nation on the earth to the extension of its own national religion will scarcely be credited by some readers, a few facts will be added in further proof of the assertion. Until a recent period the whole spiritual superintendence of the vast foreign dependencies of Great Britain was vested, *nominally*, in the Bishop of London !!! to whom all the King's subjects requiring ordination, confirmation, or the exercise of any other episcopal function, were obliged to resort from the most distant parts of the world. Until the separation of the United States of America, the admirable Society to which the good bishop has alluded in his letter, by supplying them with clergymen and providing funds for their support, constituted the only spiritual link between those important colonies and the Established Church of the mother-country. In the earlier days of our Indian empire almost the only efforts to establish Christianity in that quarter of the globe were made by a voluntary association — the "Society for promoting Christian Knowledge;" and there is too much reason to fear that those efforts were more appreciated even by the heathen than by the Christians themselves. For it stands on record that Hyder Ali, that bitter enemy of England, prior to his invasion of the Carnatic, in 1792, issued the following order to his generals for the protection of the Society's apostolic missionary, Christian Swartz: — "Permit the father, Swartz, to go unmolested, and show him respect and kindness, *for he is a holy man.*" Nor was religion better attended to in New South Wales than in India, for with the first division of settlers, comprising one thousand convicts, despatched to the former country, not a single clergyman or religious instructor was embarked. The strongest instance, however, of men's indifference to religion in those earlier days of our colonial policy remains to be stated. In the year 1793, Lord Macartney, the British ambassador to China, in his negotiations with that court, actually adduced such indifference as a reason why England should be favoured with greater commercial advantages than other European nations. "The English," such is this disgraceful admission, "never attempt to dispute the worship or tenets of others. They come to China with no such views. *They have no priests or chaplains with them, as other European nations have.*" The above facts ought to be weighed in estimating the services which the British ministers rendered to religion by the

The following letter, though it has no connexion with preceding subjects, is introduced as a proof of the friendly feeling and kindly nature of the writer; and to show that generous minds are superior to political prejudices in the exercise of social intercourse. The real character, indeed, of public men is often best developed in private life; and it is not so much between opposing leaders that asperity usually prevails, as between those once of the same party whom circumstances may have unhappily severed.

" My dear Lord, July, 1813.

" I did not receive your kind invitation till yesterday, and should be very happy indeed to accept it; but my plans have been too often disconcerted, during my journey, to justify my making any engagement, however enticing.

" I must congratulate you most sincerely on the great event in Spain.* It does so much good, and reflects such real glory on our arms, and might lead so easily to that best of all possible events—a speedy and glorious peace, that even if it should strengthen your atrocious, abominable, arm-searching, persecuting ministry, I must yet rejoice:

' Scelera ipsa nefasque
Hâc mercede placent.'

" Ever yours, VASSALL HOLLAND."†

establishment of episcopacy in India in 1813. The sound principles by which they were then influenced are exhibited in the following statement which Lord Sidmouth addressed about this time to Lord Wodehouse, who had transmitted to him a memorial from that excellent prelate, Dr. Stewart, the first bishop of Quebec:—" Canada is strangely circumstanced; but I am confident that there is on the part of every member of the government a sincere and earnest disposition to uphold and protect the Protestant church in that and every other possession of the British crown."

* The battle of Vittoria.

† Lord Sidmouth, on some occasion, speaking of Lord Holland,

About the same period Lord Sidmouth received a letter from another friendly opponent, Mr. Rufus King, formerly American minister in this country, introducing his son, Mr. Charles King, who was about to visit England on his private affairs, "notwithstanding the interruption which the unhappy war interposed to that freedom of intercourse which had heretofore proved so mutually advantageous." In his reply his Lordship expressed "his regret, which was shared by all the members of the government whose attention was called to the subject, that the immediate object of Mr. Charles King's coming to England could not, unfortunately, be accomplished. I cannot forbear adding," he proceeded, "that your son will leave in this country the most favourable impressions of himself. He will tell you that his father is never mentioned here but with the esteem and respect which are due to his character." It is gratifying when the calamities of war are mitigated by such friendly intercourse; and as these expressions of regard from the pen of a British cabinet minister could not fail to prove acceptable to the American senator, the circumstance, although trivial in itself, is deemed worthy of record, as a proof of the alacrity with which his Lordship availed himself of any opportunity to promote the welfare of his country.

From this topic, the miscellaneous nature of the correspondence directs attention to one of a totally different character, which Lord Sidmouth mentioned to his brother in the following terms: — "Of domestic

after strongly censuring his politics, could not help commending his amiable disposition, and ended with saying — "After all, I love him better than I ought."—*Family Recollections.*

politics, I can only tell you that the political connexion between Lord Wellesley and Canning is at an end, and that the latter has set his own immediate friends completely at liberty." This information his Lordship had derived from the subjoined letter, from Lieutenant-Colonel Allan, dated "Kingsgate, July 26th, 1813:—

"My dear Lord,

"The unreserved conversation I had with your Lordship last autumn, regarding Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, and the handsome terms in which your Lordship expressed your regard for Lord Wellesley, Lord Wellington, Mr. Pole, and Sir H. Wellesley, will account for my not losing a moment in acquainting your Lordship that a final separation has taken place between Lord Wellesley and Mr. Canning, and that there is an end of their political connexion. This event has taken place without any interruption of their private friendship. I have always conceived that their political connexion was the principal obstacle in the way of Lord Wellesley's acceptance of office. That obstacle removed, I cannot help flattering myself that the hope I have long cherished will now be realised, and that I shall see Lord Wellesley a member of the same cabinet with your Lordship. You are united in friendship, and ought to be in politics. Believe me, &c. &c.

"A. ALLAN."*

From Viscount Sidmouth to Lieut.-Colonel Allan.

"My dear Sir, Richmond Park, July 29th, 1813.

"I think myself much obliged to you for your letter. You have long been acquainted with my sentiments respecting Lord Wellesley. Those sentiments remain unchanged; but, however desirable such an union might be as that to

* Colonel Allan served with distinction in the Mysore war, and ranked high in Lord Wellesley's confidence and esteem.

which you advert, it must be recollected that the government is now formed; and that what would have been easy in June or July, 1812, must now, to say the least, be extremely difficult, if not impracticable. With respect to Mr. Canning, I must say that having, as you know, last year acquiesced in an arrangement then in contemplation, which would have comprehended him as well as Lord Wellesley, I could not, considering what has since passed between Mr. Canning and myself*, object to such an arrangement now, provided it could be accomplished with satisfaction and honour to all parties concerned. I say this to obviate an impression, which you appear to have taken, that the continuance of Lord Wellesley's connexion with Mr. Canning would, of itself, have constituted an obstacle, on my part, to a connexion between Lord Wellesley and the government. This, I am bound to declare, would not have been the case. Believe me to be, with great regard, my dear Sir, very truly yours,

"SIDMOUTH."

Amongst the letters which Lord Sidmouth received at this season was the one annexed, from his private secretary, Mr., now Sir Robert Harry Inglis, Baronet, M.P., whom, from being his son's friend, his Lordship

* This relates to the reconciliation between those parties, which happily took place in 1812. When, on the death of Lord Buckinghamshire in 1816, Mr. Canning's appointment to succeed that lamented nobleman, as president of the Board of Control, was under consideration, Lord Sidmouth recommended the measure in the following note: —

"Dear Lord Melville, Hill Street, February 8th, 1816.

"Having reflected on the subject of our yesterday's conversation, I remain of opinion that it is proper for Lord Liverpool, and, all circumstances considered, perhaps incumbent upon him, to offer a cabinet office to Mr. Canning upon the present melancholy occasion."

Mr. Canning did succeed on that vacancy, but was not gazetted until the month of June.

admitted to be his own, and for whom in that capacity he entertained a sincere and undiminished affection until the close of his life.

" My dear Lord, Killarney, Aug. 23d, 1813

" I have now traversed the larger half of the route which I originally proposed to follow, and am sufficiently satisfied with my gleanings. I will not tire you with a description of ordinary scenery, still less will I mock you by attempting to describe the scenes among which I am now writing. In truth, I did not enter Ireland on a picturesque tour; and though, in the hasty passage which I make over the country, I can only view the surface points of the Irish character, even that bird's eye view will repay me. I have been chiefly struck with the great scene of Penance, in Lough Derg, in the county of Donegal. It is possible that you may not be aware of the extent, perhaps not of the existence, of this Penance; and I hazard this supposition, from having remarked that few, if any, of the many persons to whom I have mentioned it as one of the great objects of my own tour, were at all apprised of the circumstances which could give it any interest in any eyes. I am indebted for the hint of it to Sir Thomas Acland, who saw more of Ireland than any publishing tourist, and who himself went to this lake; but the lake itself contains another object (in St. Patrick's purgatory), which your *protégé*, Mr. Maurice, endeavoured to connect with some legends in the Hindu Paranâs, and which object had been so long familiar to me in his writings, that the name alone would have attracted me to Lough Derg. The present interest of the scene is, however, sufficient, without reference to any part of previous history, to justify our curiosity. The lake is secluded from the world, not so much by absolute distance from any great town, as by the nature of the country—the mountains and bogs which form the intermediate barrier. Among the islands on this lake is one containing an area little more, I suspect, than an English acre, which is covered with chapels and other places of devotion, and residences for the priests and the prior. Here, from the 1st of June to the 15th of August, resort from all parts of Ireland,

and from some parts of Great Britain, pilgrims of both sexes, of all ages from ten years, and of all classes in society, to undergo one common discipline for one common object. All are bareheaded and barefooted; none, during any part of their penance, (which in no case is less than three days, in many six, in some nine,) may taste any thing but oat bread and water; none, on the last day of that penance, may taste any thing at all: for the twenty-four hours of that day and night they are 'in prison,' in the chapel, without food or sleep. On the night of my arrival in the neighbourhood, there were 360 persons thus in prison. The devotion which I witnessed struck me greatly: the banishment from the island of all ordinary employments and temptations naturally assisted the singleness with which that large and strangely-mixed multitude pursued their object, and rendered the island a school of very interesting observation. Three of the rules of the penance appeared to me very admirable: one is, that no pilgrim shall take alms on his journey or on his return, that the lake may not be the pretence of a mendicant tour: another, that no spirits shall be sold within three miles of the spot; that the intemperance with which Irish meetings, even of this description, too frequently close, may not occur here: the third is, that no person who belongs to any secret society, 'Ribandmen,' or 'Freemasons,' shall be admitted to the penance; that the services of the lake may not give a sanction to any dividing principle, but that all mankind may be the brethren of the pilgrims. The '*Ribandmen*' are the opposition to the '*Orangemen;*' and the exclusion of the first—their own partisans—from the benefit of this penance, is a favourable evidence of the principle on which the Roman Catholic clergy of the local establishment administer it; and, indeed, the three regulations, together, are a proof that the influence of the Roman Catholic clergy is here most profitably exerted. If either of these regulations be infringed, the guilty party forfeits the spiritual benefit which he might have derived from his penance. On the day before my arrival there were 1000 pilgrims on the island; and this has occurred once before during the season. In the course of the present season, altogether, 12,000 have been entered in the books.

This scene and some other circumstances have greatly raised my opinion of the practical character and influence of the Roman Catholic religion on the minds of the lower classes. Yet neither this scene at Lough Derg, nor any thing that I have yet seen or heard in Ireland, has weakened my conviction that it is necessary to stop short of any further concession of political power to the Roman Catholic body. If we could be morally certain that unconditional submission to their present demands would insure to us the permanent peace and union of all classes, we might, perhaps, admit the anomalies of the measure; but every new concession has furnished only the disposition and the means to extort more. 'Ask where's the north, at York it's on the Tweed;' and the north will thus recede from us, 'till all be theirs beneath the arctic sky.' Catholic emancipation will be followed by the abolition of the tithes, the erection of a Roman Catholic establishment, or the separation of the two countries, as successive objects of popular excitement; and O'Connell and O'Gorman, who, we are told, would completely lose their consequence by the success of their own present efforts, would quickly find in any one or all these, or some other of 'the thirty thousand grievances,' some most animating substitute for the war-cry which they now raise. I must not, however, run on at this rate. I ought to have written to you sooner; and, when I did write, I ought to have finished the subject with which I closed my first letter; but the place where I am writing, and the intermediate scenes through which I have passed in my progress, are sufficient to suspend the recollection of the earlier transactions of my journey. I must add, however, that my delivery of your letter to the Duke of Richmond was met immediately by a card, from the aide-de-camp in waiting, desiring my attendance at dinner at the Park: I obeyed the command, of course, and found the Duke very civil, and the Duchess very agreeable; the latter seemed to inherit a large portion of her mother's good-will towards you.

"I return, through Dublin, in the course of a fortnight. I trust that you have enjoyed your excursion as much as I

have done mine. Pray remember me kindly to every member of your family; and believe me to be, with great respect, my dear Lord, your faithful and obliged friend and servant,

"ROBERT HARRY INGLIS."

Amongst the various subjects which occupied Lord Sidmouth's attention at this period was one in which he had ever taken a deep interest, the welfare of the Established Church. Lord Liverpool had recently elevated from the chair of the Regius Professorship at Oxford, to the See of London, the present most amiable, benevolent, and exemplary primate, Dr. Howley, who addressed a letter to Lord Sidmouth warmly expressive "of that gratitude which, on the present occasion, he felt due to one to whose kindness," his Lordship was pleased to add, "he owed that step in the Church which had been the basis of all his promotion." It appears, however, from the following remark, which Lord Sidmouth addressed to the Speaker, on the 22d of September, that it was to the happy discrimination of Lord Liverpool that the Bishop owed his present unusual advancement. "Dr. Howley's appointment adds strength and dignity to our church establishment, which is also powerfully recruited by that of Dr. Van Mildert to the Regius Professorship. In these selections Lord Liverpool had great merit, for I assure you they were his own."

During this and the succeeding year the public attention was almost wholly absorbed by the stupendous events transacting on the Continent. These subjects, however, not falling under Lord Sidmouth's official cognisance, will not here be introduced; and as

the domestic occurrences present nothing more that appears to require particular notice, both the chapter and the record of the year will now be brought to a simultaneous close.*

* It appears probable, from the rough sketch of the speec with which the Prince Regent opened parliament on the 4th o November 1813 being found amongst Lord Sidmouth's papers, that it was composed by his Lordship.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1814—1816.

Downfall of Napoleon. Restoration of the Bourbons. Lord Sidmouth accompanies Louis XVIII. to Dover. Visit of the Allied Sovereigns to England. Lord Sidmouth receives Presents from the Princess Louise of Prussia — And from the Emperor Alexander. Visits Devonshire. His Opinion on the American War. Disturbances in London respecting the Corn Law. Lord Sidmouth's Opinion on that Subject. Escape of Napoleon, and Renewal of the War. Arrival of the Despatches from Waterloo. Results of the Victory. Letter from Lord Ellenborough on the Treatment proper for Napoleon. Letters to Sir T. Maitland, Mr. Bathurst, and the Duke of Newcastle, and from Lord Buckinghamshire and the Duke of Newcastle. Continental Arrangements concluded, and approved of by Lord Liverpool and Lord Sidmouth. Their permanent good Results. Lord Sidmouth an early Advocate for Church Extension. He corresponds with Dr. Wordsworth on the Question. Letter to Mr. J. C. Hobhouse respecting his Work on the late Reign of Napoleon. Death of Mr. Sheridan, and of Mr. James Adams. Expedition to Algiers. Renewal of Disturbances in the Manufacturing Districts, chiefly caused by Depression of Prices, unfavourable Season, and Want of Employment. Sentiments of the Duke of Rutland. Riots at Littleport and Ely. Trial of the Offenders. Disaffection in Nottingham. Letters from Admiral Frank, Lord Darlington, Lord Eldon, and Mr. Legh Keck. Disturbances at Merthyr Tydvil. Extreme Deficiency of Means at Lord Sidmouth's Disposal to put down Disaffection. He favours Emigration. Meetings at Spa Fields. Insurrection of the second of December. Rioters separate after wounding Mr. Platt. Course pursued by Lord Sidmouth. His Letter to the Speaker. His Conduct generally approved of. Letter from Lord Redesdale.

THE tremendous struggle of the revolution which had occupied twenty-one years of Lord Sidmouth's

political life was now drawing to a close. The invasion of France at the commencement of 1814, by attracting universal attention, procured for his Lordship and Earl Fitzwilliam some respite from their recent anxiety, and enabled them sometimes to touch on other topics than the machinations of the disaffected. In transmitting, for instance, an address from Hull, on the 9th of January, the latter expressed the following sentiments respecting the ruler of France: —

"I congratulate you most sincerely on all the important events that have happened and are now happening. The whining of Bonaparte is music to my ear: he sinks in adversity, and we shall see him die a mean dastard. I do not know whether the influence of his character will not give its hue to that of the whole nation. Judging from their papers, there seems no national spirit rising in their difficulties. Admiring the nation for its energy, for to that quality of character it has a just claim, I shall feel for our species, should it not show itself in some way or other worthy of its former reputation; as yet, it seems, like its leader, to fail. I am, my dear Lord, your Lordship's, very sincerely,

"WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM."

Lord Sidmouth's reply was written on the 12th of January, and expresses similar sentiments:—

"I can assure your Lordship," it proceeds, "that you have been often in my thoughts during the period whilst the great change has been taking place on the Continent, as I well knew how strong your feelings would be in consequence of it. What would have been those of Mr. Burke, of Windham, and of Lawrence, if their lives had been spared? The spirit of Bonaparte appears to droop with his fortunes; and I trust that the energy of the French nation, which we have had too

much reason to admire, will be suspended till the great struggle is triumphantly over. Believe me, my dear Lord, very sincerely yours,

"SIDMOUTH."

In a letter addressed, on the same day, to his brother, his Lordship thus anticipated the approaching result of the crisis:— "Never was there presented to Europe a prospect so interesting as that opened by the entrance of the allied army into France. A few weeks will, probably, decide Bonaparte's tenure of his crowns. A strong disposition towards the Bourbons is rapidly gaining ground in France."

Early in April, the accomplishment of these expectations was announced to Lord Sidmouth by his under secretary, Mr., now the Right Honourable Sir John Beckett, in the following hurried note:—

"Whitehall, Good Friday.

"Exit Napoleon and all his family, by a decree of the French nation!!! Moniteurs are this moment arrived to the 3d. The legislative body met the day after the allies entered Paris; decreed, forthwith, the *déchéance* of Bonaparte and all his family; and established a provisional government to deliberate on a constitution suitable to the French nation. The Bourbons have not been named except by *les dames de la Halle.* I give your Lordship joy with all my heart."

The sequel to this glorious intelligence was communicated to Lord Sidmouth by Sir John Doyle, governor of Guernsey, in the following words, written on the 9th of April:—"I hasten to congratulate your Lordship on a telegraphic message I have just received from Jersey: 'The King of France pro-

claimed at Paris.' As it may not be known in London, I send off my secretary, express, with what, I conceive, decisive of a real peace."

In the exhilarating scenes of joy which followed the deliverance of Europe, Lord Sidmouth was obliged, by virtue of his office, to take an active and conspicuous part. On the 24th of April he accompanied the restored King of France to Calais, on his way to take possession of his hereditary throne; and his attention, during the two succeeding months, was chiefly occupied by the duties consequent on the arrival of the allied sovereigns in this country. The visit of the Prince Regent and his royal guests to the university of Oxford, on the 14th of June, was the subject of much elaborate arrangement, and occasioned a lengthened correspondence between the Home Office and Lord Grenville, the Chancellor of the University. Lord Sidmouth's personal attendance was necessary on that occasion, as it also was at the Lord Mayor's banquet in the city, on the 18th of June, and at the grand naval spectacle at Portsmouth, on the 25th of the same month. It was no trivial duty, and it was one which his Lordship made a point of fulfilling with his own pen, to prepare answers to the numerous loyal addresses which greeted the Regent from every side. One of the most gratifying offices which Lord Sidmouth fulfilled at this period, was that of announcing to Mr. Warren Hastings, whose trial he had attended, as Speaker, above twenty years before, that the Regent intended to nominate him a member of the privy council; a tardy honour, but one highly acceptable to the receiver, who "felt much additional gratification

in the communication made to him by his Lordship, in the expressions of personal kindness in which it was conveyed."

Amongst the numerous events to which this interesting conjuncture gave birth, one which afforded Lord Sidmouth much gratification, was the elevation of his friend, Sir Edward Pellew, to the peerage of England, in acknowledgment of his services whilst in command for four years of the Mediterranean fleet. This circumstance his Lordship announced to Mr. Charles Yorke in the following note: —

"My dear Sir, Spring Gardens, May 13th, 1814.

"I am sure it will give you pleasure to hear, if you have not heard it already, that the Prince Regent has conferred a peerage on our friend, Sir Edward Pellew. He will be gazetted to-morrow as Baron Exmouth.

"Ever sincerely yours, SIDMOUTH."

The interest which his Lordship took in this advancement of his friend was thus gratefully acknowledged by that friend on his return to England, a few weeks afterwards: —

H. M. S. Caledonia, at sea, August 5th, 1814.

"My dear Lord,

"On my return from foreign service laden with high marks of favour from my gracious sovereign, unmerited on my part except for honest zeal for his service, I cannot look back without feeling powerfully the many acts of kindness I have received from you since the day of being presented to you by Lord Chatham, on my receiving the honour of knighthood, in the year 1793, after the capture of the Cleopatra. You will not, therefore, be surprised, that I should feel a very sincere attachment for your person and interests, which I take this means of expressing, knowing how silent the tongue is when

the heart is full; and this will be my case when I have the satisfaction of paying my respects to you, which I hope to do as soon as I reach town."

In the course of this summer Lord Sidmouth had the honour of receiving a present from the Princess Louisa of Prussia, which was conferred in a manner that could not fail to impart the highest satisfaction. His Lordship had been instrumental in procuring surgical and medical stores for the relief of Prussian soldiers wounded in a former campaign, and it was in grateful acknowledgment of this service that he received from her Royal Highness, through the hands of Baron Jacobi, a beautiful porcelain cup, accompanied by the following gracious communication: —

"My Lord, "Berlin, 20th of June, 1814.

"Baron Jacobi having informed me of the kind interest your Lordship has manifested in the fate of my unfortunate countrymen, and having assured me I might offer you a cup, made at the Royal China Manufactory here, expressive of their gratitude towards their generous benefactor, I now request your Lordship's acceptance of it, accompanied by the assurance of those sentiments that I so warmly participate with all my countrymen towards a nation and a government which has such just claims on our gratitude and attachment."

"I have the honour to be your Lordship's most obliged,

"Louise, Princess of Prussia.

"Radziwill."

At this period, also, Lord Sidmouth received from the Emperor Alexander a gold box, containing a miniature likeness of his Imperial Majesty, set in diamonds, for which "splendid mark of esteem and favour" his Lordship requested Count Lieven to con-

vey to his august sovereign, in terms the most respectful, the assurance of his sincere gratitude.*

The severe and harassing duties which Lord Sidmouth's office imposed upon him during this exciting summer having materially affected his health, his Lordship, on the 23d of August, took advantage of a brief interval of repose to visit his estates in Devonshire, from whence he forwarded the following report to his friend, Lord De Dunstanville: —

"Upottery, September 4th.

"For a considerable time before I left Richmond Park, I was much indisposed, not having recovered from the effects of hard service, and of repeated colds caught in the early part of the summer. My expedition into the west has set me up; though I am sorry that my furlough cannot be extended beyond the 12th of this month."

A further allusion to the effects of his official exertions is contained in a letter which his Lordship addressed to his brother five days afterwards: — "I was very much hurried, very much unhinged, and very unwell for a considerable time before I began my journey. I have, besides, that about me," alluding

* "Lord Sidmouth, who attended the Emperor on his visit to Portsmouth, used frequently to repeat with approbation, the substance of some observations which his Imperial Majesty condescended to address to him on that occasion respecting the severity of the English criminal code of laws. 'In England,' he observed, 'where every man enjoys so much freedom of action, the execution of the laws must necessarily be severe, in consequence of the difficulty of imposing adequate restraints on the early transgression of them. As you cannot, therefore, interpose obstacles to the commission of crime, the only remaining check is to punish it severely when committed. In Russia we can interfere to prevent the commission; severe punishments, therefore, are not so essential.'"

to the irreparable domestic loss he had incurred three years before, "which I now fear I shall never be free from, and which, I am too well aware, makes me 'neglect the shows of love to other men.' This state of mind disinclines me to every exertion that is not necessary, makes me a bad correspondent, and keeps me silent in the House of Lords."

But although, as he proceeded to state, his "mind was in a frame better suited to the scenery and quiet of Devonshire than to the intercourse to which he was necessarily habituated," he manifested no diminution of energy in the discharge of his official duties, and the 13th of September beheld him "with his new private secretary," the present Viscount Sidmouth, "again seated at the end of the long table."

The only topic, however, comprised in the remaining correspondence of this year, which appears to require particular notice, is the American question, respecting which Lord Sidmouth entirely coincided in the following sentiments addressed to him by Lord Liverpool, on the 15th of September: — "I have written fully my sentiments to Lord Bathurst upon the last American note. I wish we could get out of this war: but the point upon which I am most anxious is, that we should not get deeper into it, for I fear we shall feel it a most serious embarrassment some months hence; and it is not a contest in which we are likely to obtain any glory or renown at all commensurate to the inconvenience it will occasion." Such being the view which Lord Sidmouth also took of this almost civil war, the satisfaction with which he indited the following note may readily be conjectured: —

"My dear Hiley, Whitehall, December 27th, 1814.

"Preliminaries of peace are signed with America. This is a great relief, though not in all respects a subject of exultation. * * * The war was too likely to become more and more unprofitable; and its continuance would have suspended our authority on the Continent of Europe, under circumstances the most critical. The good effects of the peace will soon be felt at Vienna."

The first letter which his Lordship received in the year 1815 was from that gallant and loyal-hearted nobleman, the Marquis of Huntly, afterwards the last Duke of Gordon, who, from this date until his death, in May, 1836, never failed to address a letter of affectionate congratulation to Lord Sidmouth on every New Year's Day*:—

"My dear Lord Sidmouth, Geneva, January 1st, 1815.

"On this day we think of the friends we have, as well as of those who are gone: amongst the former I place you; and reflecting upon the latter, I can never forget your attentions to my beloved mother; indeed, my good Lord, I feel them as I ought; on all occasions, I have myself fully experienced your friendship and kindness. If my returns have not been such as they ought to have been, charge them not to my intentions. In our private capacities, our friendship and esteem,

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* This noble and generous friend was also in the habit of annually presenting a Scotch snuff-box to Lord Sidmouth on his birthday. The offering for the year 1824 was accompanied by the following note:—

"Monday night, May 29th.

"One person, as Horace says—

'Natales aliosve dierum
Festos albatus celebret.'

For myself—

'Ut videas quàm grata mihi lux crastina surget,
Exiguum hoc magni pignus amoris habe.'"

I flatter myself, have been reciprocal; in our public ones, we have had no separate opinions; and I trust our mutual esteem and regard will cease only with our lives. We have been here three months leading a quiet and rational life, enjoying the society of this town: they are all very much attached to England, and bless us for our steadiness and perseverance; your loyal heart will rejoice at this. On the 18th, I give a great dinner to the Syndics, &c., when I will do my best to please the republic. I wish our government could in any manner mark their respect for this town. * * * When you see the Duke of York, pray offer his Royal Highness my best regards. I have now only to add, that I wish you and your family many happy returns of this day; and that I am, my dear Lord Sidmouth, yours most sincerely,

"HUNTLY."

As Lord Sidmouth's correspondence in 1815 was largely occupied by the stupendous military and political events which were enacting on the Continent, the present record of that period must necessarily partake of a miscellaneous character. The internal state of the kingdom, indeed, occasioned his Lordship but little anxiety, since even the voice of disaffection was silenced for the moment by the superior interest of foreign occurrences. The earliest transaction of the year was, however, of the former description, and was regarded, indeed, by Lord Sidmouth almost as a personal matter; for on the 15th of February, only six days after the meeting of parliament, he requested Lord De Dunstanville "to attend that day in the House of Lords, when he (Lord Sidmouth) was to be attacked by Lord Fitzwilliam, for continuing to keep the militia embodied in time of peace." This was treated as a constitutional question by the leading Whig statesmen, who argued that the government

was not justified in retaining the services of the militia, except under one or more of the four following contingencies, neither of which then existed — rebellion, insurrection, invasion, or imminent danger thereof. Lord Sidmouth's defence, in which he was seconded by Lords Eldon and Ellenborough, and fully supported by the opinions of the Attorney and Solicitor General, was, that the conduct of the government had been perfectly legal; for, although the various acts of parliament strictly defined the circumstances under which the militia should be called out, in none of them was it stated under what circumstances that force should be disembodied, from which he inferred that this was a matter studiously left for the decision of the Crown. The House confirmed this view by a majority of above two to one. The two subjects by which the attention of parliament was chiefly occupied during the earlier part of this session — the Property Tax and Corn Laws — are briefly alluded to in the following letter from Mr. Bond, dated February 26th: —

"You seem to be travelling on very well upon the difficult road of corn laws, and, at least for the present, reasonably well in finances. I am quite satisfied that that which is done as to corn is the best measure that could be adopted. Whether the price ought to be 76 or 80, I am not master enough of detail to have a decided opinion; and I know that no farmer is to be believed on the subject of rent, no more than any merchant in any legislative question which he supposes will affect his interests. I have no doubt that the wisest measure in finance would have been to have continued the property tax, with some modifications; and which, with some modifications, would be, I conceive, notwithstanding the odium attached to it, one of the very best species of taxation. The real truth is, that

it is odious because efficient, because it reaches property by no other means assailable; and it would particularly recommend it to me, that it would at this time reach all those idle people who have emigrated to the Continent, withdrawing from the payment of the assessed taxes, and taking from the country sums equal to the subsidising of armies. I have no doubt, however, considering that you had the corn laws to handle, and that the people had discovered so strong a feeling upon the subject, that it was quite right to abandon it."

* *

As events then immediately impending deprived the parliamentary proceedings on the above two subjects of their value and interest, Mr. Bond's brief notice of them is, in a political point of view, quite sufficient. The disgraceful riots, however, by which the discussion of the corn laws was accompanied, and the energy with which Lord Sidmouth applied himself to their suppression, must not be so concisely disposed of.

The bill proposed by government, the object of which was to permit the free importation of foreign corn for home consumption, when the average price of British wheat amounted to 80*s*. the quarter, and not till then, was naturally very unpopular amongst the lowest classes in the metropolis, some of whom adopted the vain and wicked idea of intimidating those members of the legislature who were supposed to be in favour of the measure, by attacking and demolishing their houses. This disgraceful spirit first displayed itself during the debate in the Commons on the 6th of March, upon the question whether the importation price of wheat should be 76*s*. or 80*s*., in violent assaults upon members when proceeding to the House. These outrages having been promptly checked by the appearance of the mili-

tary, the rioters, as the night advanced, dispersed in small parties about the metropolis, to satiate their revenge on the residences of obnoxious legislators; and as it was impossible for the authorities either to anticipate their movements, or to pursue them with sufficient celerity to prevent mischief, many houses received considerable injury. Especially was this the case with respect to the residences of the Lord Chancellor, in Bedford Square; of Earl Bathurst, in Mansfield Street; and of Mr. Robinson, the mover of the resolutions, in Burlington Street; all of which presented, on the following morning, sad examples of the licentiousness of unbridled liberty. The author can speak personally of these disgraceful scenes, for he underwent two sieges (both of which were raised by the timely arrival of the military), in his father's house, in Harley Street; and he well remembers the sudden and unwelcome apparition of the yelling mob, their instantaneous disappearance at a preconcerted signal, and the organisation manifested in all their proceedings. The outrages were repeated, though evidently with diminished confidence, on the two following nights, upon the former of which the rioters were fired upon from Mr. Robinson's house, and a by-stander was unfortunately killed. This was a fitting occasion for the exercise of that firmness and vigilance for which Lord Sidmouth was remarkable. London was immediately environed with troops in support of the civil power, and a proclamation was published in the name of the Regent; in addition to which his Lordship himself issued a circular on the 9th of March, "to the several parishes in the metropolis, calling upon the principal inhabitants thereof

to assemble and concert measures in support of those adopted by the government, for the preservation of the peace, and the protection of the inhabitants." These measures insured, after the third night, the total discontinuance of those lawless aggressions; and shortly afterwards the obnoxious resolutions were passed by large majorities in the House of Lords, without further interruption of external violence.

Lord Sidmouth's own opinion on that fruitful subject of discord is comprised in the following answer to his highly-valued friend, John Coker, Esq., chairman of quarter sessions in the county of Oxford, who had written to his Lordship, recommending the reduction of the importation price to 75*s.*: —

"My dear Sir, March 15th, 1815.

"I thank you for your letter; and, as you are one of those whose opinions have great weight with me, I regret that I cannot agree with you in the present instance. My apprehension and conviction is, that the protecting price (80*s.*), as fixed by the bill, is not sufficient to give that confidence to the corn-grower which is essential to the attainment of the great object of the bill, namely, an ample and independent supply. The continual dread of arriving at that price which is to let in foreign competition may occasionally have some effect in keeping down the markets; but it will check the application of capital and labour to the production of grain, the abundant supply of which from our own soil will not, I fear, be effectually provided for by the proposed security against foreign competition till the price per quarter has reached 80*s.* Any reduction of that price I should therefore consider as improvident and hazardous. Yours, &c. &c.

"SIDMOUTH."

Even after this measure had passed the House of Lords, another danger awaited it, which arose from an address of the city of London to the Regent, peti-

tioning him to withhold from it the royal assent. The Prince's reply, which was written by Lord Sidmouth, contained a most dignified rebuke, expressing "the greatest concern at the sentiments addressed to him, and declaring his Royal Highness's conviction that, by exercising the King's prerogative in the manner indicated, he should manifest a want of confidence in a parliament which, under the most trying difficulties, had, by the wisdom, vigour, and firmness of its conduct, invariably upheld the honour of his Majesty's crown, and promoted the best interests of his people." The only fact which remains to be stated is, that the parties who fired the fatal shots from Mr. Robinson's house were tried, on the coroner's warrant, at the Old Bailey, on the 8th of April, and fully acquitted — Mr. Justice Chambre declaring "there could not be a clearer case," and the jury pronouncing themselves satisfied without hearing the evidence for the defence. "Your Lordship," observed Mr. Beckett, in reporting the case, "will feel, I know, extremely gratified by the result of this trial. Nothing could have taken a better course. It extinguishes the coroner and all his proceedings utterly, and will teach people that they may defend themselves and their property with security, if they are attacked. It will also let the military see that they will be protected when they do their duty. The Attorney General conducted the case with his usual ability."

Amidst these domestic transactions an event suddenly occurred on the Continent, which excited universal anxiety and astonishment. On the 1st of March, Bonaparte, accompanied by about a thousand men, landed in France from Elba, and immediately

commenced his triumphant march to Paris, which capital he reached on the 20th, only a few hours after the departure of the legitimate monarch. The events which succeeded, until the grand catastrophe on the 18th of June, will be passed over in silence; but when the Hon. Colonel Percy, the bearer of the despatches relating to that decisive victory, arrived in London, on the evening of the 21st, the Regent was honouring Mr. and Mrs. Boehm with his presence at dinner; and Lord Sidmouth, who had remained at his office in anxious expectation of intelligence, accompanied the gallant officer to his Royal Highness, in St. James's Square. His Lordship was forcibly struck by the intense interest of the scene, and used frequently to describe it to his friends. To the Prince's successive inquiries for the safety of various parties in whom he felt particularly interested, the answer almost invariably was, "Killed," or "Wounded;" until at length his Royal Highness exclaimed, in an accent nearly of despair, "Good Heaven! I seem to have lost all my friends." On retiring from the royal presence, Lord Sidmouth repaired to Lord Ellenborough, who lived within a few doors of Mr. Boehm. It was now late, and his Lordship received his friend's intelligence in bed. "Bring me my clothes," he said, immediately ringing for his servant. "I will not rob myself of one moment's enjoyment of this glorious night." *

* This appears the most suitable place for the insertion of the following extract from a letter addressed by Marquis Wellesley to Lord Sidmouth, on the 4th of October, 1821, giving the history of the Wellington tree: —

"I perceive that the King is to visit Waterloo. In the centre of the British lines on that field stood an ancient elm tree, under which great part of the plans of the day were settled. The tree

Events now followed each other with marvellous rapidity. On the 25th of June Lord Sidmouth informed his brother that "Bonaparte had abdicated," and shortly afterwards he wrote to the same party to say that "the great prize, Paris, was obtained, and the greater, Bonaparte, would soon be secured." This last event, the consummation of Europe's triumph, he communicated to Lord Ellenborough in a letter to which his Lordship, on the 23d of July, replied as follows: — "I thank you for your kind note of congratulation upon an event which had gladdened my ear a few hours before I received your favour from Richmond Park. The custody of the tiger will be attended, however, with some trouble and embarrassment. The course to be pursued with him as to his immediate personal treatment is not difficult. It must, I should think, be simple, yet with no unnecessary harshness in it. The omission of any particle of caution, by which he may be let loose upon the world again, would be a crime of the highest magni-

was much injured by the shot. It was cut down, and a magnificent chair carved from the remains; which chair was presented to the King, and placed in Carlton House. An inscription being *demanded* for the royal elm chair, the following lines were inscribed upon it: —

'GEORGIO AUGUSTO,
EUROPÆ LIBERATORI.

Ampla inter spolia, et magni decora alta triumphi,
Ulmus erit fastis commemoranda tuis;
Quam super exoriens faustâ tibi gloria pennâ,
Palmam oleamque uno detulit alma die:
Immortale decus maneat; famâque perenni
Felicique geras sceptra paterna manu,
Et, tua victrices dum cingant tempora lauri,
Materies solio digna sit ista tuo.'"

tude, and of which I will not allow myself to suspect that any part of his Majesty's government could be guilty."

The ultimate destination of the captive was intimated to Mr. Hiley Addington by his brother, on the 30th of July, in the following terms:—"The prisoner has made me a bad correspondent; but the final decision is taken, and he will be under weigh for St. Helena by the middle of the week. He is very much disappointed by his destination. The extravagant courtesy and respect with which he was at first received and treated provoked and disgusted every body. Our friend, Sir G. Cockburn, is to conduct him to St. Helena, and to remain there with the naval means of effectual enclosure, and Sir H. Lowe is to be his custos. His title is to be 'General.'"

Writing on the following day to Mr. Bathurst, his Lordship added, that "as all neutrals were to be interdicted, and the fishing boats transferred from the hands of private adventurers to those of the government, Sir G. Cockburn is confident that he can prevent ingress and egress. It appears that the communications in the island by means of telegraphs are very complete, and that from the constant clearness of the air and stillness of the sea, boats may be seen at an immense distance."

Conferences now ensued at Paris between the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh on the part of England, and the representatives of the other allied powers, for the purpose of disentangling the perplexed skein of European politics. Upon this subject Lord Sidmouth thus expressed his sentiments to Sir Thomas Maitland, on the 13th of August:—"The late ex-

traordinary occurrences are to this country subjects of just exultation, and to Europe of joy and hope; though not such as to justify that degree of confidence which can only arise from an unclouded prospect of quiet and security. The volcano is not burnt out, and even with the allied armies in France, there are evident indications of fresh convulsions. It is therefore necessary to seize the moment for affording to the Continent protection, as far as possible, against the consequences which are to be apprehended from a weak government and an irritated and distracted people; for experience has shown that internal agitation is far indeed from being any security against the spirit of foreign conquest, a spirit which must now be heightened by that of revenge, and which, as the government is not likely to prove strong enough to control it by authority, can only be kept under by the hopelessness of success."

The negotiations then in progress, and upon which the future repose of the world depended, did not fall under Lord Sidmouth's immediate department; nevertheless it was natural that he should regard them with great interest. During part of the months of August and September, his Lordship made a hurried excursion into Devonshire; but it appears from the annexed letter, which he addressed to Mr. Bathurst from Upottery on the 2d of September, that prior to his departure from town he had attended the council, at which the course to be pursued by Great Britain at the conference had been finally arranged, and also that he had taken measures for being informed of what might occur during his absence by his friends in the cabinet: — "I am anxious, my dear Charles,

to put you in possession of what is passing at Paris as far as we are concerned, and I cannot do this better than by sending you the enclosed letters from Lord Buckinghamshire and Vansittart, which I wish you to return. Before I left town our line was taken, liable to be influenced by circumstances which might oblige us to rise in our demands, and even, in some respects, to alter the nature of them. I am satisfied that it was right, upon the arrival of Lord Stewart, to acquiesce in the opinions of the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh, although their tone has always been lower than I could have wished."

It is not often that letters addressed by one cabinet minister to another can with propriety be submitted to public perusal. Since, however, Lord Buckinghamshire, in the subjoined note, takes only a brief and general view of the circumstances, without entering, as Mr. Vansittart does, into minute and delicate particulars, there can, it is thought, be no impropriety in submitting it to the reader.*

* As this is the last occasion on which it will be necessary to refer to the correspondence of this respected nobleman, it is advisable to state here that his Lordship died on the 4th of February in the following year, 1816, to the deep regret of Lord Sidmouth, to whom he had written a long and friendly letter only four days before. He was most truly attached to Lord Sidmouth, and the friendship was mutual, combining every consideration, social and political. His Lordship announced this event to the Regent in the following words:—

"Whitehall, February 5th, 1816.

"It is Lord Sidmouth's painful duty to inform your Royal Highness of the death of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, who expired at eleven o'clock last night. Lord Sidmouth will not presume to obtrude any expression of his personal grief upon this melancholy occasion; but he trusts that he may be allowed to offer his sincere condolence to your Royal Highness on the loss of

"My dear Lord Sidmouth, London, Aug. 28th.

"I have only time to write a line to say, that Lord Stewart arrived yesterday from Paris, sent by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Castlereagh to ascertain explicitly the sentiments of the cabinet. It appears to them that there had, at different times, been so many shades of variation in the instructions, that they did not know, with sufficient precision, what was meant.

"Castlereagh has forwarded a most able despatch, which I have not time to enter upon; but the result is, an opinion that he can carry, if now authorised distinctly to act, the conditions resolved upon at the last cabinet you attended, with the exception of dismantling Lisle and Strasbourg. The Emperor of Russia has delivered in a paper to the same effect, and Austria is ready to concur with England and Russia; but Prussia is obstinate, and the government overawed by the army. Castlereagh argues strongly against attempting to carry any thing you do not mean to insist upon; and it has been determined that nothing should be said about the dismantling of the two great fortresses."

Whilst these momentous subjects were under the consideration of the cabinet, Lord Sidmouth received, on the 16th of September, from the Duke of Newcastle, an able and spirited paper, which, though addressed in the first instance to his Lordship, was intended also for his colleagues in office. In that document his Grace, who, with Lord Sidmouth, dreaded the consequences of a too lenient policy, strongly urged that "we should look to our present and future security whilst the means were in our reach, and to this end should endeavour so to reduce the power of France that she could not, if she would, any longer endanger the security of Europe."

an able, zealous, and faithful servant of the crown, and of a most valuable and respectable member of society."

In acknowledging this communication on the 24th of September, Lord Sidmouth "begged his Grace to be assured of the respect he felt for the motives which had led to so clear and manly an exposition of the policy and conduct which ought to be observed by the allies towards France at the present most critical conjuncture. It would be impertinent," his Lordship proceeded, "on his part to offer any detailed observations on the several suggestions in his Grace's letter. He must, however, express his hope and conviction that the government would not be found to have taken an erroneous or imperfect view of its duties, or to have shrunk from the firm and steady discharge of them; and that the result of the military advantages which had been gained would be such as to satisfy the just claims and expectations of this country and of Europe."

His Lordship had now returned to Whitehall, from whence he informed Mr. Bathurst on the 2d of October, that "the French government, after many struggles, had agreed to negotiate upon the grounds of indemnity and future security, and to give up Landau and two or three insulated places of a similar description;" and two days afterwards he enclosed to the same party "the terms of a treaty actually agreed to." The conditions, as thus concluded, gave perfect satisfaction to Lord Liverpool, whose letters addressed to Lord Sidmouth at this period, contained some very judicious observations on the subject: — "I have no doubt," he remarked on the 12th of October, "that the treaty with France will be generally approved, and that the terms of it will be considered as bearing with as much severity on that country as is in any

way consistent with maintaining Louis XVIII. and his family on the throne." "The truth is," his Lordship remarked three days afterwards, "the real reduction of the power of old France is a chimera, unless it were produced by a moral and internal schism in the country, such as the south adhering to the legitimate branch, and the remainder of France choosing another government. Such an event is by no means impossible; but it must begin of itself, and it would then be a problem whether it would be *upon the whole* an advantage to mankind."

In a third letter, dated October 18th, Lord Liverpool thus expressed himself respecting the precarious footing of the legitimate dynasty in France: — "I am satisfied that the presence of an allied force in Paris during the winter is absolutely necessary. The King's government would not exist for a week if it was withdrawn before a new force had been constituted in its place, which unavoidably requires time. I am, however, anxious that this force should not be exclusively British. I have written to Castlereagh to this effect, and at the same time have called his attention to the necessity of adopting every security against the consequences of surprise. The Duke of Wellington has evidently no apprehensions; and the only point upon which I understand all parties in France are agreed, is the absolute necessity of a foreign force, and more particularly of a British force, remaining in the country for some time. Strange that it should have come to this."

Lord Sidmouth's own approbation of the treaty, as finally concluded, may be inferred from the following passage which he addressed to Sir Thomas Maitland

on the 5th of November: — "Our continental affairs are in as satisfactory a state as could reasonably be expected, considering the weakness of the executive government in France, and the discontent and restlessness of the people. The terms of the treaty, as far as they are known, appear to be generally approved of. * * * One could have wept at the fate of Murat. It affords, however, to the throne of Naples a degree of security not possessed by that of France; for the danger to which, however, I look with more anxiety to Vienna than to St. Helena; I mean to the son than to the father. You probably know that Malta was one of the places thought of for the residence of Bonaparte, and I think you will not be disposed, on any account, to regret that such was not his destination."

Lord Sidmouth and his noble colleague were correct in their anticipations that the conditions of the treaty would be generally approved of. Nearly all those who thought deeply on such subjects, agreed, it is believed, with Mr. George Rose's declaration, that "he could not refer to an instance where there had been shown more talent, firmness, justice, and moderation, than in the present settlement of matters at the close of a long, bloody, and expensive contest." The wisdom, however, of the adjustment of 1815, no longer rests on opinion alone, since Europe is still reaping, at the distance of thirty-one years, the fruits of the allied councils on that occasion, in one of, if not the longest general peace she has ever enjoyed since she was first subdivided into nations.

The favourable termination of the congress, and the prosperous state of the finances, induced the

government to prorogue parliament to the 1st of February, a later period than usual.* Lord Sidmouth employed a portion of this interval in preparing the government and the public for some general measure in promotion of Church extension. He had already alluded to this important subject on the 20th of November, 1814, when writing to the Rev. C. D. Wray, who had pointed out to him the "disproportion between the population of Manchester and Salford, and the means of accommodation in those towns at places of public worship under the Established Church." "The circumstance," his Lordship observed, "struck me forcibly when the returns I had moved for were laid before the House of Lords in 1811; and I urged it, together with many other instances of such a disproportion, as a ground for the interposition of parliament to correct an evil so favourable to the progress of schism, and indeed so injurious to the interests and influence of religion. On this subject I have conversed frequently with many intelligent and firm friends of the Establishment, and I trust that the attention of parliament will at length be awakened to the urgent importance of adopting, upon an extensive scale, such measures as will afford

* This circumstance occasioned some uneasiness to the Lord Chancellor, for the singular reason mentioned in the following note, dated October 23d :—"Since I have been Chancellor, beginning, I suppose, upon the example of former doings, we have not had a prorogation beyond seventy-nine days; I fancy, on the notion of having the forty days *eundo* and the forty *redeundo* for privilege from arrest. I observe the present is at least ninety days; and though I believe that this is legal, if you, my dear Lord, from your parliamentary experience, would be kind enough to tell me by return of post whether this thing is right, you may make me comfortable for the last days of my holydays."

the means of religious instruction, and of attending public worship, to the members of our Church."

These being his Lordship's sentiments, it may readily be imagined with what satisfaction he imparted the following intelligence to Lord Kenyon — through life his valued friend and confidential coadjutor in supporting the Protestant religion, and promoting the welfare of the Established Church: —

"My dear Lord, Whitehall, Nov. 20th, 1815.

"I have the greatest satisfaction in acquainting you, in confidence, that I have now no doubt of Lord Liverpool's determination to submit a proposition to parliament, in the ensuing session, for an augmentation, to be progressively made, of the number of places of worship under the Established Church.* Believe me to be, with true regard, my dear Lord, very sincerely yours,

"SIDMOUTH."

It does not appear to what extent Lord Sidmouth contributed to this decision of the Premier; but during the present autumn he was in correspondence with Dr. Wordsworth, Dean of Bocking, "as to the best means of making a first approach to the public on the subject of church extension," which they agreed would be, by an original essay. His Lordship had suggested the names of two eminent individuals for the accomplishment of this object; but Dr. Wordsworth, in his reply, on the 26th of September, expressed his "persuasion that, however competent Mr. Coleridge, or his own brother, may be to the production of a popular essay on the subject, yet neither of them possessed

* In consequence of financial difficulties, Lord Sidmouth was disappointed in his expectation of the immediate accomplishment of this object, which was not proposed by the Prince Regent to parliament until January, 1818.

that knowledge in detail of ecclesiastical matters which would be requisite to meet his Lordship's purposes. * * * Southey," he added, "would execute a review well, if, by the original essay, he could be put, in a degree, in possession of the details."

Lord Sidmouth was now entering upon a period of great labour and responsibility. Before, however, the more important portion of his official duties is described, the miscellaneous topics of the new year will be added to those of the same character belonging to the former one, which have recently been related.

At this period his Lordship returned the following reply to a letter which he received from Mr., now the Right Honourable Sir John Hobhouse, Bart., requesting his Lordship's acceptance of a copy of his work on "the last Reign of the Emperor Napoleon." It contained, Mr. Hobhouse candidly admitted, "opinions so entirely opposite to those which had guided the public measures of that cabinet of which his Lordship formed so distinguished a part, that he was not willing his diatribe should reach his Lordship except through his own hands, being desirous of saying that nothing contained in it was intended to bear on that individual character for which he was bound to feel so much respect."

"Sir, Hill Street, Feb. 23d, 1816.

"I am much obliged to you for your letter, and for the order given to your bookseller to send me a copy of your last publication. That your work is written with ability I am sure; and I cannot but be equally convinced that the sentiments contained in it are such as you sincerely believe to be just. Nevertheless, from what you have said, and from what I have heard from other quarters, I am glad to return you my thanks for this mark of attention previous to my

perusal of your work, as I am now spared the pain of expressing opinions which it is too certain I must have entertained, and which I should have thought it disingenuous and improper to suppress.

"I am, &c. &c. SIDMOUTH."

If no notice were here to be taken of the death of Mr. Sheridan, the reader, who must have observed in the progress of this work the numerous marks of personal respect and friendship, which, amidst occasional collisions of political sentiment, Lord Sidmouth received from that distinguished genius, would not readily forgive the omission.

Mr. Sheridan expired on the 7th of July, 1816; and on Saturday, the 13th, was buried in Westminster Abbey. Lord Sidmouth, in a note which he addressed to his brother, briefly alluded to these events; stating that he attended the funeral as a mourner, and that, whilst he stood over the last earthly asylum of departed intellect, he experienced all those congenial feelings which could more readily be conceived than expressed. "It was not," he added, "until a few days previous to the event that he appeared to be aware of danger."

In this instance Lord Sidmouth must have keenly experienced that necessary accompaniment of existence in any degree protracted, the pang of survivorship; for, from the period of his Lordship's resignation in 1804, Mr. Sheridan had been his frequent visiter at Richmond Park; and they had reciprocated much friendly and confidential intercourse both private and political.*

* In the month of September, this year, Lord Sidmouth had also the misfortune to lose, after a protracted illness, his brother-in-law, James Adams, Esq., a most amiable character, possessed of all the

Shortly after the above occurrences, an event of a very different nature took place, in which another of his Lordship's friends was engaged. His correspondence, throughout the summer, manifests the deep interest he took in the result of the expedition sent to compel, from the piratical states of Barbary, the abolition for ever of Christian slavery: the satisfaction, therefore, with which he received the following letter from the leader of that expedition may easily be imagined: —

"Queen Charlotte, Algiers' Bay, Aug. 30th, 1816.

"My dear Lord Sidmouth,

"I perfectly remember, in your office, pledging myself to you for the destruction of the Algerine navy. I am happy to inform you I have redeemed my pledge, and am in whole bones, as is also my opponent the Dey. His chastisement, however, has humbled him to the dust; and he would receive me, if I chose it, on the Mole, upon his knees.

"You will readily believe how much I regret the sad loss we have sustained: 883 out of 6500 is a large proportion; but we were exposed to almost a complete circle of fire. I can only enclose you the copy of my memorandum to-day to the fleet, and beg you to believe that I consider this the happiest event of my fortunate life. One thousand liberated slaves, just arrived from the country whither the Dey had driven them, are now cheering on the Mole. The consul has been cruelly treated, and the Dey been compelled to beg his pardon, before his full court, by the dictation of my captain.

"God bless you, my dear Lord. I hope to reach England before October, and am ever your most faithful friend and servant,

"EXMOUTH."

The reply to the above letter is dated October 7th,

qualities calculated to attract esteem and affection in private life. Mr. Adams sat for some years in parliament for Bramber, &c. and during Mr. Addington's administration filled the office of a Lord of the Admiralty.

the day following that on which Lord Exmouth arrived at Spithead: —

"Most cordially," it observes, "do I hail your arrival. You may rest assured that the service performed at Algiers is justly estimated by the Prince Regent and the whole country, and that it will ever hold a most eminent and glorious place in our history.* I am not a little impatient to shake you by the hand; and, on the day after your arrival in town, shall depend upon you at Richmond Park, where Lord Ellenborough and some other friends will rejoice to meet you. You need not be assured of the pride and exultation with which I subscribe myself, your affectionate and faithful friend,

"SIDMOUTH."

It is now necessary to pass from these gleanings of the general correspondence, to the consideration of that special resistance to popular encroachment which constituted an important part of Lord Sidmouth's services at the Home Office. The remaining seven years, indeed, of his Lordship's public life was one extended campaign, between lawless aggression on one side, and the firm and temperate exercise of constitutional authority on the other. Scarcely had the tranquillity of Europe been restored, when the spirit of disaffection resumed those seditious proceedings which the stirring events of the recent campaign had momentarily suspended. As early indeed as the 2d of May, 1815, Lord Sidmouth is found thanking the

* The opinion of Napoleon on this attack was communicated by Lord Sidmouth to his friend on the 20th of August, 1817: —

"On Tuesday I met Sir Pulteney Malcolm, who had just returned from St. Helena. *His charge* had predicted a failure at Algiers; but he afterwards did full justice to those by whom his prophecy had been falsified."

Duke of Newcastle for the "fresh and lamentable indications" his Grace had forwarded, "of the turbulent spirit still prevailing amongst the lower orders of the people in Nottingham." With the exception, however, of disturbances on the Tyne, against which a proclamation was issued on the 19th of October, that year was suffered to conclude without the actual infraction, in any quarter, of the public peace. Nevertheless, throughout the succeeding winter and spring evil disposed persons were every where engaged in poisoning the minds of the lower orders — an operation rendered too successful by the universal distress resulting from so sudden a transition from a state of war to that of peace. Poverty and absence of employment are at all times the principal causes of disloyalty and discontent; and, unfortunately, these were not wanting on the present occcasion. At the commencement of 1816 such were the difficulties and alarm by which agriculture was beset, that Lord Sidmouth declared his opinion that "the present prices of grain, the present taxes, and the present rents, could not (with few exceptions) continue together;" whilst, on the other hand, the Duke of Rutland, describing to his Lordship, on the 1st of January, the state of Birmingham, observed that "the depressed state of the iron trade, added to an attempt lately made to reduce the rate of wages, had thrown great numbers of the lower orders out of work, and that the presence of a considerable military force alone prevented them from proceeding to actual disturbance. I think," his Grace added, "it is now incontrovertibly proved, that there is a sympathy and a connexion between the agricultural and the manufacturing interests, which render it

impossible for one of them to prosper when the other experiences an unnatural depression."

On the remedy for this state of things Lord Sidmouth thus expressed his opinion to the Earl of Sheffield, on the 21st of January: — "The alleviation of the difficulties arising from the diminished value of agricultural produce is not to be looked for from the intervention of government and parliament, but must be derived from the adaptation of rent to the price of produce, and from the approximation which must take place of the price of all other articles of consumption to that of grain."

The parties, however, immediately interested, were little disposed to await the slow progress of this self-adjustment; instigated, therefore, by mischievous agitators, and encouraged, probably, by the absence of troops, resulting from an improvident reduction of the military establishments, in the month of May a portion of the rural population broke forth into the most riotous extremes at Downham, Ely, and Littleport.

The following account of this riot has been chiefly extracted from "a plain statement of the facts" forwarded to Lord Sidmouth by the Reverend John Vachell, vicar of the last-mentioned parish, who was one of the principal sufferers on the occasion. It appears that the first disposition to riot manifested itself at the small village of Southery, six miles from Littleport, where a mob assembled on the 18th of May, complaining of want of work, lowness of wages, and dearness of flour. These parties proceeded in a riotous manner to Downham, plundering the butchers' and bakers' shops, and committing various acts of

outrage, until a compromise was, very improperly, made with them by the magistrates, to the effect that labourers should receive two shillings a day, and have their flour at two shillings and sixpence per stone, the regular price being three shillings and nine-pence.

Nothing further occurred until Wednesday the 22d of May, on which day there were two or three benefit club dinners at Littleport. In the evening the members, consisting chiefly of labourers, assembled to the number of two hundred, and with a horn and a banner paraded the village in a tumultuous manner, committing every excess of plunder and outrage until about eleven o'clock, when they presented themselves at the parsonage demanding money. Mr. Vachell's remonstrances and promises were equally vain: his house was forced open and completely plundered, whilst the family, comprising besides himself, his wife, and an invalid daughter, concealed themselves in the fields, whence in the dead of the night they walked to Ely, a distance of about six miles. On the morrow the rioters, flushed with success, and bearing their fire-arms and other weapons in a waggon, assembled in greatly increased numbers in the market-place at Ely, where they were joined by numerous disaffected persons belonging to that place. They next opened negotiations with the magistrates, who felt it advisable to comply with their terms, upon which two thirds of the Littleport men returned to their homes. About noon, on the arrival of eighteen troopers of the 1st royal dragoons from Bury, the remainder of the rioters dispersed, with a threat, however, of re-assembling at night. Meanwhile the Reverend Henry Law, Rector of Stretham, had proceeded express to Lord

Sidmouth; and his Lordship hearing that Sir Henry B. Dudley, a magistrate of Ely, was in town, sent immediately for him, and despatched him to Ely in the course of Thursday night with full instructions how to act.

From Cambridge the party was preceded by forty men of the Royston troop of volunteer cavalry, commanded by Major Wortham; and finding on its arrival at Ely that the rioters were still at Littleport, and committing great atrocities there, resolved to surprise them in that place. Accordingly, a force consisting of eighteen men of the Royals, commanded by Captain Methuen, the staff of the Cambridge militia, under Lieutenant Woollard, part of the Royston yeomanry, and some special constables and gentlemen of Ely, and headed by Sir H. B. Dudley and Mr. Law, immediately marched out to the attack, which was completely successful. The first rioter who attempted resistance being instantly shot by a dragoon, the spectacle so intimidated the remainder that they made but a feeble resistance, and above seventy of them were taken back prisoners to Ely. A special commision was speedily issued to Justices Abbott and Burrough, and Edward Christian, Esq., Chief Justice of Ely, for the trial of the offenders, and the proceedings commenced on the 17th of June; when thirty-four of these unhappy culprits were capitally convicted, of whom five shortly afterwards expiated their offences with their lives. Similar disturbances arose in Downham, Bury, Cambridge, and Norwich; but in consequence, probably, of the prompt and judicious severity exercised at Ely, were speedily suppressed.

Another cause of national distress was now added to Lord Sidmouth's list of difficulties. The summer and autumn of 1816 were so unusually wet that there was scarcely a dry interval between June and October. The result of this calamity was a great diminution in the quantity, and deterioration in the quality, of the whole agricultural produce of the season; and this, of necessity, was followed by an increase in price of the usual articles of consumption. Meanwhile, the previous diminution in the profits of agriculture and manufactures had greatly reduced both the demand for labour and its remuneration: the combination, therefore, of these opposite causes could not fail to produce an immediate increase of the public distresses and discontent. These circumstances are frequently alluded to in the correspondence of the period. Thus, in writing to his brother, on the 3d of August, Lord Sidmouth observed: — "Of the state of the country I cannot report favourably. The distress in some parts is extreme, but the disposition to disturbance less than might have been expected. There is a general persuasion that the want of demand and employment arises from unavoidable causes, and that no means are neglected to mitigate its effects. But it is to the autumn and winter that I look with anxiety. The proceedings at Ely have unquestionably had a good effect." Indications of the approaching storm, however, were now becoming more frequent. In Nottingham, disaffection had risen to such a height that the populace could not restrain themselves even in the presence of the judges, but grossly insulted those venerable personages whilst in the performance of their duties at the summer assizes. Flagrant as

such conduct was, Lord Sidmouth never forgot that poverty was one of the chief incentives to it; and on this point he expressed himself thus feelingly when writing to Admiral Frank, afterwards Sotheron, one of the representatives of the county, on the 16th of September:—"You well know that I have long looked with great anxiety at the internal state of the country. I am concerned to think that the prevailing distress is so severely felt in your county; but I see no reason for believing that it would or could be alleviated either by any proceedings at a public meeting, or by parliament itself. The former would lead to discussions, which, instead of allaying, might have the effect of increasing irritation; and I am satisfied that, on public grounds, an early meeting of parliament ought rather to be avoided than desired."

Intelligence which reached Lord Sidmouth at this time of renewed disturbances at Bishops-Wearmouth, and of the existence of an organised conspiracy against the public peace in the manufacturing districts, tended to confirm his anticipations of a winter of discontent and disturbance. On the latter point Mr. Legh Keck, writing from Ormskirk, on the 27th of September, distinctly describes the "Luddite outrages" as the results "of an extraordinary system;" and expresses his conviction that "no step short of the full development of their systematic arrangements could have the effect of deterring the very many and daring parties so connected, and securing the public peace."

Concurrently with these proofs that disaffection was still lurking in the land, Lord Sidmouth received daily evidence of the destructive effects of the weather on the fruits of the earth. From Raby Castle the

Earl of Darlington wrote on the 8th of October, that the "distress in Yorkshire was unprecedented — that there was a total stagnation of the little trade they even had — that wheat was already more than one guinea per bushel, and no old corn in store — that the potato crops had failed — that the harvest was then only beginning, the corn in many parts being still quite green, and that he feared a total defalcation of all grain that season from the deluge of rain which had fallen for many weeks, and was still falling. This information he felt it his duty confidentially to state to his Lordship, more especially as he had expressed his wish for him to do so."

On the same day on which the above statement was transmitted, an equally unfavourable report was addressed to Lord Sidmouth from the opposite extremity of the kingdom (Encombe in Dorsetshire) by the Lord Chancellor, who wrote in the twofold capacity of a cabinet minister and a farmer. The words which immediately follow relate to the former character, and tend to show the efficient aid which Lord Sidmouth at that time rendered to his colleagues in their various departments: — "I think you have acted as President since Lord Harrowby left us, and therefore I take leave to mention, that about the middle of this month it would be expedient to have a council for the further prorogation of parliament." His Lordship now passes from the subject of the cabinet to that of the country: — "The papers Mr. Beckett showed me alarmed me (I think justly) very much indeed; and if we think we are to go on smoothly, without the effectual means of suppressing mischief, and large means too, we shall be most grievously mistaken. I

look to the winter with fear and trembling. In this island our wheat is good for nothing. Barley and oats reasonably good. As a farmer I am ruined here and in Durham. So much for peace and plenty."

His Lordship was then recovering from an alarming indisposition, in allusion to which he concludes his letter with the following sensible and pious observation: — "I am doing what I can to regain strength. Existence I despaired of for some hours. Of a person placed in the eternal round of a chancellor's occupations, I fear disease may make it often but too true, 'nimis notus omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.' That is not as it should be."

The absence of many of the cabinet ministers from London, at this time, left Lord Sidmouth with the weight of nearly the whole executive government on his shoulders. In this position he was required to decide on numerous important questions, amongst others on a proposition from the Irish government for the stoppage of distilleries in consequence of the deficient harvest, upon which subject he addressed the following letter to the Right Honourable Robert Peel: —

"My dear Sir, Whitehall, Oct. 14th, 1816.

"I have sent your letter to Lord Liverpool, who is at Walmer. I must own I am extremely averse to the stoppage of the distilleries generally, or in Ireland only. The measure is bad in principle; and I am convinced that, in every instance in which it has been resorted to, its effects have, upon the whole, been more injurious than beneficial. It is even questionable whether its sole object — that of insuring the application of a greater quantity of grain to the purpose of human subsistence — would be accomplished, in any degree, in Ireland, where illicit distillation is carried on with so much

facility: that it would not be accomplished in any considerable and material degree is, I think, absolutely certain. I flatter myself, however, that, since the date of your letter, the weather and the prospect of the harvest have improved in Ireland as they have in this country. I ought to add, that Vansittart entirely concurs in the opinions which I have expressed.

"I am, &c. SIDMOUTH."

As the autumn advanced the progress of sedition became more open and daring. Writing, on the 18th of October, to a magistrate of Nottingham, which place appears to have earned for itself, in those times, the unenviable distinction of being always one of the earliest and chief seats of discontent and turbulence, Lord Sidmouth described "the state of that town and neighbourhood as a subject of general reprobation and disgust. The prevailing impression," he added, "certainly was, that there was a want of vigilance and activity in the magistracy. Government could do no more than give impulse, and all the aid that could be afforded, to the execution of the laws."

His Lordship's attention was now drawn from these accustomed scenes of disturbance to the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan, where, about the 18th of October, the workmen employed at the iron works at Tredegar, Merthyr Tydvil, &c. &c., assembling to the number of 10,000 or 12,000, stopped the blasts of the furnaces at those places, and resorted to the most riotous proceedings.

The energetic measures by which Lord Sidmouth overcame all these difficulties shall be related in the words in which his Lordship himself described them to Lord Liverpool on the 20th of October:—"The

accounts lately received from different parts of the kingdom are of a very unsatisfactory, if not alarming, nature. Those from the counties of Monmouth, Brecon, and Glamorgan are the most serious. I am now in town, in consequence of a representation sent to me by express*, requiring assistance for the protection of property, and the support of the civil power. Sir Henry Torrens, who has just left me, concurs with me in thinking that the three companies of the 55th, which must have reached the scene of disturbance yesterday, will have sufficed to restore tranquillity. Two troops of the 23d dragoons will be ordered by this day's mail to proceed immediately from Dorchester to Bristol, whence, if necessary, they will cross the Severn; and, as the report of this disturbance in Wales may stir the evil and discontented spirits in other parts, I have desired Torrens to write by the mail of to-night to Sir John Byng and Sir Henry Fane, desiring the former to keep his eye particularly on Manchester and its neighbourhood, and the latter on Nottingham."

Through these judicious measures, and the spirited exertions of Mr. Benjamin Hall and other magistrates in the neighbourhood of Merthyr, who received Lord

* His Lordship was called out of Richmond church, where he was attending divine service with his family, by this intelligence, when he instantly accompanied the messenger back to London in the hack chaise, and sent orders for a part of the 55th regiment, stationed at Bristol, to march to Merthyr, where they arrived most opportunely at the moment when the magistrates were expostulating with the rioters. The cause of this outbreak was stated by Sir John Morris to be low wages resulting from the depression in the prices of copper and iron, the former of which articles had fallen from 180*l.* to 80*l.*, and the latter from 20*l.* to 8*l.* per ton.

Sidmouth's warm thanks on the occasion, tranquillity was immediately afterwards restored; and on the 22d of October his Lordship had the satisfaction of informing the Prince Regent that these "serious disturbances had been entirely suppressed."

The sad deficiency of troops, which constituted Lord Sidmouth's most formidable difficulty in his long campaign against the disaffected, was strikingly betrayed on this occasion, when it was necessary to bring cavalry from Dorchester and Weymouth, to supply the place of three companies of infantry, which constituted the whole garrison of Bristol: yet so unyielding and consistent to his system was Lord Sidmouth, that, notwithstanding the inadequacy of his means, he did not hesitate to send the following instruction to Mr. Hall: — "There will, I trust, be no concession or compromise on the part of the masters. If they remain firm, the men will return to their work, when they find that nothing is to be gained by violence or intimidation." Conscious, however, of the real weakness of the government in this particular, his Lordship omitted no opportunity of recommending what he considered the best remedy for the evil, an augmentation of the yeomanry corps. Thus, in replying, on the 25th of October, to his friend, Mr. Blackburne, M. P., who had applied for a troop of cavalry to be stationed at Blackburn, he observed, that "it was to him a matter of surprise, considering the zeal and loyalty of the county of Lancaster, that it was provided with so small an establishment of that description of force which was so peculiarly adapted to the present circumstances of the country — he meant

yeomanry cavalry." Another remedy for the difficulties of the times to which Lord Sidmouth attached much importance, he thus touched upon, on the 29th of October, when writing to Dr. Grey, afterwards Bishop of Bristol: — "I have long been of opinion that, instead of discouragement, facilities should be afforded to those who, being unable to live with ease and comfort in this kingdom, are desirous of removing to other parts of his Majesty's dominions, where they may exist with usefulness to their country, and with happiness to themselves. The parts of the world to which the views of such persons should be directed are Upper Canada, Ceylon, and the Cape of Good Hope. This is a subject which at present engages the serious attention of the government." *

Meanwhile the winter, which Lord Sidmouth expected "would be a trying one," was wearing on; and the promptitude and determination hitherto displayed by the government and magistrates could not wholly prevent the activity which was constantly exerted in poisoning and inflaming the minds of the people, from producing its intended effect. "On Monday, the 28th of October," as his Lordship informed Mr. Bathurst, "there was a serious riot at Birmingham; and, though quelled at the time, with the assistance of the military,

* In this and similar instances, Lord Sidmouth's mind was directed to the application of a remedy both prompt and suitable to the existing evil. Thus he was of opinion that the distressed condition of the lower classes in Ireland could never be ameliorated without the enaction of poor laws; and he long privately endeavoured, but without effect, to impress the same conviction on those with whom he conversed, and especially on his colleagues. He was also desirous of seeing the system of Scotch banking adopted in England. — *Miss Addington's Notes.*

it was expected to recur. The neighbourhood of Manchester was very bad, and Nottingham hopeless."

The scene, however, of the next serious disturbance was the metropolis itself, where, as is stated in the reports of "secret committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons appointed to inquire into certain dangerous meetings," which were presented on the 18th and 19th of February, 1817, "a traitorous conspiracy had been undoubtedly formed for the purpose of overthrowing the established government, and effecting a general plunder. After various consultations," their Lordships observed, "in the preceding autumn, a plan had been adopted for ascertaining the number of the conspirators, by calling a public meeting in Spa Fields, on the pretext of voting a petition to the Prince Regent. The meeting took place on the 15th of November, when, after the most inflammatory language had been held, an adjournment was made to the 2d of December, at the same place, which was selected for its vicinity to the Bank and the Tower." The interim was employed in making preparations for the accomplishment of the atrocious design in contemplation. The most dangerous placards were prepared, and plans were laid for surprising the soldiers in their barracks, seizing the artillery, stopping the bridges, taking possession of the Tower and Bank, and liberating the inmates of the prisons. Arms, also, and ammunition were procured, tricolored standards and cockades were provided, and on the ominous 2d of December the principal persons concerned in the plan proceeded to Spa Fields, with a waggon engaged for the purpose. From this waggon, before the ostensible business of the day commenced, a direct invitation

was addressed to the multitude to proceed immediately to redress their own grievances. A tricolor flag was then displayed, and a number of persons followed it out of the field. They took the direction of Smithfield and Snow Hill, to the Royal Exchange, plundering all the gunsmiths' shops they could find on the way. Whilst passing through Skinner Street a young man rushed into the shop of Mr. Beckwith, a gun-maker; and on being told by a Mr. Richard Platt, of Brixton, who was casually present, to go about his business, drew a pistol, and shot that unfortunate person in the body. The villain, on being apprehended, was instantly rescued by the mob, but not before the police officer had taken some papers from his pockets which might lead to his discovery.* After seizing the arms in Mr. Beckwith's shop, the rioters, few in number, but desperate in purpose, passed on, firing as they went, to the Royal Exchange, where they were met by the Lord Mayor, Sir James Shaw, and a party of the police, who there captured three of their number, and obtained possession of their tricolor flag.† After a vain attempt to rescue their comrades, the principal conspirators, finding themselves surrounded by preparations, lost heart, and separated of their own accord, without further bloodshed or collision. Lord Sidmouth, therefore, was enabled to announce, by the same night's mails, the entire suppression of this

* These last particulars are extracted from a letter which Lord Sidmouth received two days afterwards from Mr. Platt himself, who, contrary to expectation, recovered from his wound.

† This information is derived from a note to Lord Sidmouth from Sir William Curtis, who, "being unfortunately lame, took the chair that day at the Mansion House, in the absence of his colleagues, who were actively employed in opposing traitors."

traitorous enterprise — a fact of no slight importance; since, as the committee of the Commons reported, intelligence of its success was anxiously expected by the disaffected in many parts of the provinces. During these transactions the political meeting was proceeding in Spa Fields, under its chief instigator, the mob orator, Mr. Hunt; but this more atrocious undertaking was headed by an obscure medical practitioner named Watson, by his son — the party who wounded Mr. Platt — Arthur Thistlewood, who afterwards became so notorious, and a few other desperate men.

The fate of these miscreants was by no means commensurate with the heinousness of their offence on this occasion. The elder Watson, Thistlewood, Preston, and Hooper, were committed to the Tower for high treason; but, although true bills were found against them by the grand jury of London, the former, when put on his trial, was acquitted; and the three others, being brought up before the Court of King's Bench, on the 17th of June, the Attorney-General declined to produce evidence against them, and they were consequently discharged. The younger Watson — although a proclamation was issued offering 500*l.* for his detection — succeeded in concealing himself for a time in London, until an opportunity was afforded for his escape to America, where, it was afterwards reported, he met with the same fate which he had so fully deserved and so narrowly escaped in England.

The part which Lord Sidmouth took in these anxious proceedings must now be described. In insurrections of this nature, where the commencement

is so immediately followed by the catastrophe, the great difficulty which those in authority find is not to interfere too soon, but still in time to prevent serious mischief. All that can be done where such consequences are expected, is to be perfectly prepared, and in that state quietly to await the first actual violation of the law; and this plan Lord Sidmouth strictly pursued in the present instance. Before the former meeting, as he informed the Speaker, "every measure of precaution had been taken;" and the result of such vigilance was, that no serious violation of the peace occurred. On finding, however, upon consultation with the Attorney and Solicitor General, that the prosecution of Hunt for words spoken on that former occasion, and of the printer of a seditious paper respecting it, which had been circulated by Cobbett, was not advisable, all he did was firmly and silently to await the expected moment of action. His sentiments after the event will be given in the words of his reply to Mr. Abbot, who had congratulated him on "having successfully put down Mr. Hunt and his followers, without a pretext of personal complaint against himself:"—

"Richmond Park, Dec. 8th, 1816.

"I am much gratified by your commendations, for I know their value: at the same time it must be felt that I should have been without excuse if adequate and timely preparations had not been made for Monday last. I have not, however, the pain of being conscious of any omission. The material and difficult point, on Monday, was to preserve regularity and arrangement in the midst of alarm and confusion; and not to suffer attention to be distracted, or the troops to be broken into minute subdivisions, in consequence of the communications and reports which were pouring in from all quarters. I must say that the peace officers and the military performed

their duties most admirably. Of the Lord Mayor it is but justice to add, that he acted with spirit in a moment of real danger; and that, in his conduct upon that occasion, his politics never appeared. But the Lord Mayor is not entitled to the same respect when carrying fuel to the flame (as will be the case at Carlton House to-morrow), as when he is endeavouring to extinguish it.* I can only add, that every exertion continues to be made to collect information; and, above all, to discover and to bring to speedy trial those who have been concerned in the late flagrant transactions. All the depositions, examinations, &c. &c., taken at the Mansion House, Bow Street, &c. &c., are sent to me, and instantly forwarded to the law officers. They were of opinion that the last meeting could not legally be dispersed, unless some circumstances occurred to justify the reading of the Riot Act; but I do not hesitate to tell you (in confidence) that the connexion between the harangues in Spa Fields and the riots in London being completely established, the next meeting, if allowed to assemble at all, shall only assemble to hear the reading of the Riot Act, and then be dispersed immediately.

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* Alderman Wood, then Lord Mayor, was a vehement opponent of the government. Allusion is here made to a very intemperate address and petition of the Corporation of London to the Prince Regent, containing the most unqualified condemnation of the whole system of government, and urging the most violent changes, which the Lord Mayor had been very instrumental in getting up. The reply which Lord Sidmouth prepared for his Royal Highness on this occasion contained an eloquent and dignified rebuke, which attracted the warm commendation of several of his Lordship's friends. Nor did this offensive address by any means express the real sentiments of the city of London. For, on the 24th of December, the ward of Tower, at a public wardmote, presided over by their alderman, Sir William Curtis, unanimously passed a series of resolutions expressing "the utmost confidence in the wisdom of the legislature, and none whatever in those projects of innovation which afforded no prospect of present relief, and could tend only, under the specious name of reform, to weaken the attachment of their fellow-subjects to the established and happy constitution of this country."

Parliament must, indeed, interpose to prevent altogether these self-appointed meetings for the public discussion of alleged grievances; and the mischief which may be done in the mean time, from the want of such a legal restraint, is to me a subject of most painful reflection."

Letters expressing unqualified approbation of the firmness and promptitude of the Home Department in suppressing the late disturbances in London now poured in from every quarter. Amongst these testimonials, the following, from Lord Ellenborough, must have proved peculiarly satisfactory: — "For the preservation of the metropolis from the dangers which lately threatened we are almost entirely indebted to the vigilance and spirit of your Lordship." The most comprehensive view, however, of the aspect of domestic affairs was taken by Lord Redesdale in the following extracts from a letter to Lord Sidmouth, with which our report of the events of that gloomy year will be concluded.

"Batsford, Dec. 11th, 1816.

"* * * I hope that the ebullition of discontent, manifested in so direct and outrageous an attack on property, will have the effect of putting all persons possessing property, whatever may be their opinions on political subjects, on their guard against the ruffians who are now disposed to disturb the public peace. The distresses of the times are unquestionably great, and are felt from the highest to the lowest. I fear that, in many cases, rentals will be reduced one half. The distress which this will occasion must be of long continuance. Men who have been living on an income of 1000*l.* a year will find it very difficult to live on 500*l.*: but many have purchased in confidence of the existing rental, and many have settled their families accordingly; charging estates with jointures, fortunes for younger children, and mortgages. Many such estates are not equal now to bear the charges

upon them. * * * These distresses, and the emigrations to the Continent, have produced a prodigious discharge of servants and labourers of all descriptions, and a consequent burden on the country in the shape of poor rates. The discharge of soldiers, sailors, and others in government employ, in consequence of the peace, has added to this burden, almost the whole of which falls on the agriculture of the country. It is a direct tax on corn and all the produce of the land; and a tax the most injurious, because it falls heaviest at the time when those who pay it are least able to bear the burden. All the public taxes put together are nothing, as burdens on the land, compared with the poor rates, and the other burdens directly affecting it; such as roads, militia, county rates, and, indeed, the tithes. All these have so augmented of late, that some of them are ten times the amount they were twenty years ago. * * * The consequence is very marked in this country. Many of the old country gentlemen's families are gone; and I have not a doubt that the destruction of their hereditary influence has greatly contributed to the present insubordination, which, if not checked, will finally produce great disorder. * * * If landed property has not predominant influence, the British constitution, which is founded on the predominance of landed property, cannot stand. We are rapidly becoming—if we are not already—a nation of shopkeepers; and shopkeepers too much resemble the man in the fable, whose goose produced golden eggs. The land is the goose which produces the golden eggs of trade and manufactures; and the traders and manufacturers of this country would not hesitate to join in its destruction, if they fancied they could individually gain by it, at the moment, more golden eggs, without reflecting on the consequences even to themselves. Excuse my troubling you on this subject. Believe me, my dear Lord, yours very faithfully,

"REDESDALE."

CHAPTER XXXII.

1817.

Increasing Tranquillity of the Kingdom in the Beginning of 1817 — *This Prospect speedily changed. Hunt's Tour in the West. Mr. Nadin's Report of the Disaffection of Manchester, and threatening State of the Manufacturing District generally. Letter from Dr. Adam Clarke on the Times. Attack on the Prince Regent when returning from opening Parliament. Papers referred to Secret Committees and Reports thereon. Lord Sidmouth's Speech on moving the second Reading of the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act — Motion opposed by Lords Wellesley, Grey, and Holland — Supported by Lord Grenville. That and three other Bills passed. Lord Sidmouth's circular Letter to Lords Lieutenant attacked in Parliament — His Defence of, and Statement of the Benefit produced by, his Circular. Letter from the Duke of Northumberland. Correspondence with the Prince Regent. Conviction and Execution of Luddites at Leicester. Insurrection at South Wingfield, Derbyshire. Progress of the Insurgents — A Man shot — They are dispersed by a Party of Dragoons. Criminals tried under a special Commission, and Three of them executed. Second Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act carried in Parliament. Employment of Informers by the Government justified — Reflections thereon. Correspondence between Lord Sidmouth and Sir John Byng. Mr. Henry Hobhouse appointed Under Secretary in the Home Office. Liberation of some of the Parties confined under the Suspension Act — Merciful Treatment of one of those Persons. Lord Sidmouth goes to Malvern — Receives the Freedoms of Worcester, Tewkesbury, and Evesham. Improved State of the Country in the Autumn of* 1817 — *Correspondence with Lords Kenyon and Exmouth thereon.*

Attempt to create a Disturbance on Tower Hill. Letters of Approbation from Dr. Adam Clarke and Lord Colchester. Death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales — Grief of the Regent and Royal Family. Acquittal of Mr. Hone for publishing blasphemous Parodies — Reflections thereon.

THE year 1817 commenced satisfactorily. The prompt suppression of the insurrection in the metropolis, simply by the display of power without its exercise, had struck a panic into the hearts of the disaffected throughout the kingdom; the deficiency in the crops proved less extensive than had been apprehended, and British capital, which only required sufficient time and opportunities for its transfer from manufactures essential to war, to those requisite in a state of peace, was gradually receiving increased employment, to the benefit of the labourer and artisan. Such was the information which Lord Sidmouth received at this period from various correspondents; amongst others, from Sir William Congreve, who was attending the Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia on a tour of inspection throughout England, and who favoured his Lordship on the 5th of January with the result of his observations. This enabled Lord Sidmouth to accept an invitation to the Pavilion, conveyed to him through Sir B. Bloomfield, on the 5th of January, in the following terms: — "The Prince Regent hopes that the general quiet of the country, so happily restored by your Lordship's unceasing vigilance, will now enable you to make his Royal Highness a visit at this place." Brief, however, was his Lordship's repose. The popular fury had not yet expended half its energies; and he plainly saw, as he intimated to Mr. Loraine Smith on the 23d of

January, the ill-concealed fire again ready to burst forth. "We have reached a great crisis, and the utmost exertions of the intelligent and well-principled members of the community are indispensably necessary to avert consequences the most ruinous and fatal." Mr. Hunt, the hero of that portion of the assemblage at Spa Fields which did not break out into open violence, commenced the disturbances of the year with an inflammatory tour into the west of England; but, owing to the vigilance of the authorities, and the good and loyal feeling predominant in that portion of the empire, his oratorical powers were in most instances exerted in vain. This was especially the case at Bristol and Bath, in which latter city his proceedings, as described to Lord Sidmouth by Chief Justice Gibbs and others, did not produce the slightest effect. In the great manufacturing district of Manchester, disaffection possessed a readier means of excitement, in the distresses arising from the fluctuations of trade; and hence, notwithstanding the orderly disposition of the respectable inhabitants, there already existed amongst the lower classes the germs of that dissatisfaction, which, two years afterwards, produced such serious results. Early in the preceding autumn Mr. Bootle Wilbraham had transmitted to Lord Sidmouth a report from the principal police officer of Manchester, expressing his apprehension that "troublesome times were returning," and that an augmentation of the military force would be required. "The lower orders," he said, "are every where meeting in large bodies, and are very clamorous. Delegates from all quarters are moving about amongst them, as they were before the last dis-

turbance, and they talk of a general union of the lower orders throughout the kingdom." That Mr. Nadin's suspicions were well founded, quickly became manifest in the assemblage of two public meetings at Manchester on the 13th of January and the 3d of February, 1817, which, however, through the precautions employed, occasioned no serious infraction of the peace. Nevertheless, the general aspect of affairs was so threatening in several counties, that Lord Sidmouth considered it necessary, on the 11th of January, to issue a letter to their Lords Lieutenant, requesting them "to strengthen the civil power by encouraging the enrolment of respectable householders to act as special constables for a period of not less than three months, and to communicate to the several yeomanry corps the wish of the government, that they would hold themselves in a state of preparation to assist the civil authorities in case of necessity." It appears from the correspondence, that amongst the noblemen to whom this letter was addressed, and who afforded Lord Sidmouth much valuable assistance, were the Dukes of Rutland and Portland, Earls Talbot and Lonsdale, and the Duke of Northumberland; the latter of whom, though at that time dissatisfied with the government generally, expressed himself very favourably of Lord Sidmouth, "from whom," his Grace was pleased to observe, "when he was minister, and afterwards, he had ever met with the greatest attention and kindness." The correspondence of this period contains a letter addressed to Lord Sidmouth by Mr. Hunt, which, being remarkable chiefly for its prolixity, will not be treated in this work with more notice than it probably received from his Lordship. The same day,

however, February 3d, brought an antidote in the shape of an approving letter from Dr. Adam Clarke, who, in presenting to Lord Sidmouth another part of his elaborate work on the Bible, entered upon "matters of higher importance than any that could concern himself," namely, the state of the times. The good Doctor wrote from Lancashire, where he had opportunities, he said, "of learning the nature of the popular complaints, and of removing, by a simple statement of facts, imaginary grievances, by which, through unfair representations, multitudes, now for the first time, conceived themselves to be oppressed.

"It is a most dangerous thing," he added, "to sap the confidence of the people in the integrity of their rulers; and he is the worst foe of the public tranquillity and prosperity who endeavours to do it. In all the general ferment, I have invariably observed that, in the public opinion, the home department was never better managed, and never gave greater satisfaction. In this management your Lordship has been placed in difficult times; and multitudes, as well as myself, feel gratitude to that Divine Providence that has enabled your Lordship and colleagues to make that cool, considerate, and timely application of power, regulated with great prudence, discretion, and skill, that has invariably repressed evil without appearing to be coercive; mitigated suffering, allayed discontent, and encouraged every good and laudable work, by means adapted not only to insure the desired end, but also to meet the prejudices and conciliate the affections of the public. You, my Lord, have the high satisfaction, that falls to the lot of but few public characters, to find that your zealous endeavours to promote the general welfare are properly acknowledged and gratefully received by at least a vast majority of the nation.

"I wish I could congratulate your Lordship on a termination of the difficulties connected with your situation. * * * It is the property of a great and well-instructed

mind never to be *alarmed;* and never to be obliged to proceed to *hurried* measures; because such a mind has always its foresight and precautions, and, therefore, can never be taken by surprise. I could say much on this subject; but I know to whom I am writing; and shall only add, God has hitherto made your Lordship, and I trust will continue you, his minister for good to the British nation."

On the 28th of January an outrage was perpetrated on the Prince Regent, which too clearly proved "the danger to the public peace" of "sapping the confidence of the people in the integrity of their rulers." After his Royal Highness had delivered the speech, and the debate on the address was about to commence, Lord Sidmouth announced to the House of Peers, that on the return of the state carriage through the Park, the glass of the window had been perforated by two stones, or bullets from an air gun, which appeared to have been levelled at the royal person. This daring atrocity excited the utmost horror and indignation, and a proclamation was immediately issued offering a thousand pounds for the discovery of the perpetrators; but as no detection followed, the incident is only mentioned here as a feature of the times, and as one of the circumstances by which Lord Sidmouth's difficulties were augmented.

In the speech from the throne, the Regent had expressed "a just indignation at the attempts which had been made to take advantage of the distresses of the country, for the purpose of exciting a spirit of sedition and violence," and had declared "his determination to omit no precautions for preserving the public peace, and counteracting the designs of the disaffected."

In fulfilment of the above resolution, Lord Sidmouth, on the 3d of February, presented a royal message to the House of Lords, stating "that the Prince Regent had directed certain papers, containing information respecting certain seditious meetings and practices, to be laid before their Lordships, which his Royal Highness recommended to their immediate and serious consideration." On the subsequent day his Lordship followed up this step by moving that the said papers should be referred to a committee of secrecy, consisting of eleven Lords, to be chosen by ballot. This was accordingly done; and the same course having been pursued in the Lower House, the two committees presented their reports on the 18th and 19th of February. As these documents fully confirmed the description of the alarming state of the country contained in the speech from the throne, motions were immediately founded upon them for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, which were carried in both Houses by very large majorities, namely, in the Lords by 150 to 35, and in the Commons by 265 against 103. Lord Sidmouth himself moved the second reading of the bill for effecting this object on the 24th of February, and in the speech which he made on the occasion stated "the necessity of withholding the information on which the reports were founded, from regard to the safety of the individuals by whom it had been supplied. Such, however," his Lordship proceeded, "was the nature of the evidence, that it left no doubt on the minds of the committee that 'a traitorous conspiracy had been formed in the metropolis for the purpose of overthrowing, by means of a general insurrection, the

established government, and of effecting a general plunder and division of property.' This was the *first* point in the report. The *second* was that the committee were fully convinced that such designs had not been confined to the capital, but were extending widely throughout Great Britain, particularly in the manufacturing districts:" and the *third* was a declaration that "such a state of things could not be suffered to continue without hazarding the most dreadful evils, and that further provisions were decidedly necessary for the preservation of the public peace, and the protection of the best interests of the whole community." His Lordship then proceeded to trace the history of "that malignant spirit which had brought such disgrace upon the domestic character of the people; so soon, too, after the period, when the fidelity and gallantry displayed by the nation had placed it on the loftiest pinnacle of glory. Unhappily this spirit had long prevailed in the country, but especially since the commencement of the French Revolution. During the war it had been unceasingly busied in detracting from the merits of our own victories, and exaggerating the prowess of our enemies. On the arrival of peace, its activity had been redoubled; and whilst the people were suffering under a distress, which, as few would deny, arose in a great degree from unavoidable causes, it wickedly employed this circumstance in fomenting the discontent of the people, by exaggerating their inevitable calamities, by attributing them to the ministers of the day, or to defects in the constitution, and, finally, by teaching their deluded followers that peaceable entreaties were vain, and that by open violence alone could their grievances be redressed.

"Every means," Lord Sidmouth next observed, "had been employed to punish the authors and publishers of the seditious libels by which these atrocious objects had been sought to be obtained. The law officers were instructed to file informations in every case where a conviction was probable, trusting with confidence to the loyalty and integrity of a British jury; but these publications were often drawn up with so much dexterity, and their authors had so profited by former lessons, that greater difficulties in the way of conviction now presented themselves than at any former period. Meanwhile the seditious were proceeding in their operations with an industry wholly unexampled. Their chief instruments were clubs and public meetings. Of the former, an organised system * had been established in every quarter, under the semblance of demanding parliamentary reform, but many of them, he was convinced, had that specious pretext in their mouths only, but rebellion and revolution in their hearts.

"Public meetings," his Lordship proceeded, "had been adjourned until all was ripe for action, and the first disturbance of the peace of the country took place on the 2d of December. On that occasion ministers had made preparations fully adequate to the danger. His object always was to employ the civil power, and never to call in the military, except in cases of absolute emergency. On the day in question the soldiers were so posted as to afford immediate assistance in any part of the metropolis; and as the civil power was wholly incompetent to

* The Hampden Clubs.

preserve tranquillity, he had deemed it his duty, without the sanction of the Lord Mayor, to despatch a troop of Life Guards in pursuit of the rioters into any part of the city, by which means a speedy end was put to the disturbances. It had been asserted, that ministers were previously informed of the treasonable purposes of the persons engaged; but this was not the case. The circumstances that marked the atrocious character of the meeting in Spafields did not come to the knowledge of government until three weeks before the meeting of parliament on the 28th of January. The committee had reported, that this state of things could not exist without risking the most dreadful evils, and that additional measures were necessary to secure the good order of society. The measures which the government would recommend for this purpose were, *first*, to make the Act of 36th Geo. III. c. 7., for the additional protection of the King's person, applicable also to the Prince Regent: *secondly*, to renew an act which had expired in the preceding August, for punishing attempts to seduce soldiers and sailors from their duty: *thirdly*, to make the 39th Geo. III., which had formerly put down the London Corresponding Society, applicable to the existing clubs, and especially to one of them; and, *fourthly*, to renew an act that had produced many salutary effects in 1795, and which had for its object the prevention of seditious meetings. But parliament must not stop there. In many places attempts of a most dangerous nature were still proceeding, for which ministers possessed no means of prevention. The bills he had mentioned could not reach these crying evils, and hence arose the necessity,

at all times to be deeply lamented, of suspending, for a time, one of the most important privileges of the constitution, in order to arm the government with sufficient power to protect that constitution from entire destruction. He called for the immediate suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, for the security of his Majesty's peaceable subjects, for the protection of parliament, for the maintenance of our liberties, and the perpetuation of the blessings of the constitution. To reject, or even suspend, the proposed measure would be a desperate infatuation; to adopt it, a wise precaution, inasmuch as it would prevent the perpetration of crimes, for which, if once committed, punishment would come too late. 'Cætera maleficia tum persequare, ubi facta sunt; hoc nisi provideris ne accidat, ubi evenit, frustrà judicia implores.'" Lord Sidmouth was replied to by his old and constant friend, Lord Wellesley, who, though fully admitting the necessity of strong and additional measures, could not reconcile to his mind a resort to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Lord Grey and Lord Holland took the same view of the question, but Lord Grenville admitted, in the most candid manner, that, "notwithstanding his reluctance to invade what was justly regarded as the palladium of British liberty, he was bound to confess that he considered such a case had been completely made out as would justify the legislature in sanctioning the proposed measure."

On the same evening, in the House of Commons, permission was given to Lord Castlereagh, by a majority of 190 to 14, to bring in a bill "For more effectually preventing seditious Meetings and Assem-

blies." Leave was also obtained "to revive and make perpetual the Act of 37th Geo. III. for the Prevention and Punishment of Attempts to seduce Persons serving his Majesty by Sea or Land from their Allegiance;" and also a bill "For the Safety and Preservation of the Person of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent." These all passed through both Houses with unusual facility; the only one which was at all keenly contested being that for the prevention of seditious meetings, the second reading of which was moved by Lord Sidmouth on the 20th of March. In his speech on that occasion, his Lordship stated that the bill was formed upon the plan, and included the provisions, of the Seditious Meetings' Acts of the 36th and 39th of his present Majesty, and that it contained those farther provisions which were particularly stated to be necessary, in the reports of the secret committees. The only division which occurred on this bill was upon the question that it do pass, which was carried in the affirmative by a majority of 111 to 23.

Armed with the additional powers which had been so readily conferred by the legislature, Lord Sidmouth, on the 27th of March, issued a circular letter to the Lords Lieutenant of counties, which subsequently gave rise to some discussion in parliament, and to considerable differences of opinion beyond its doors. Regarding, as his Lordship observed in that letter, "the circulation of blasphemous and seditious pamphlets and writings as a growing evil, which it was most desirable to check, he had consulted the law servants of the crown whether an individual found publishing such documents might be brought immediately before a justice of the peace, under a warrant,

to answer for his conduct; and he had received from them a reply that a justice might issue a warrant to apprehend a person so charged before him, upon oath, and compel him to give bail to answer the same." This opinion Lord Sidmouth communicated to the Lords Lieutenant with a request "that they would recommend to the several magistrates within their jurisdiction to act thereupon." The legal opinion of the King's Attorney and Solicitor, Sir William Garrow and Sir Samuel Shepherd, upon which the circular above alluded to was founded, was strongly controverted, and gave rise to motions expressive of disapprobation in both Houses of Parliament, in the Lords by Earl Grey, and in the Commons by Sir Samuel Romilly. On both these occasions, the legality of the act was confirmed by large majorities; in the Upper House by 75 to 19, and in the Lower by 157 to 49. The debate on Lord Grey's motion, that "the case submitted to the law officers of the crown for their opinion be laid before the House," took place on the 12th of May. His Lordship, whose speech opened, of course, the whole question, was answered by Lord Ellenborough and the Lord Chancellor, both of whom decidedly confirmed the correctness of the legal opinion upon which Lord Sidmouth had acted. Relying upon the sanction of those high authorities, his Lordship, in his own defence, declined to address himself to the legal question, and trusted for his justification to the necessity for his interference, and the benefits which had resulted from it. "At the period in question," he observed, "unremitting activity was exerted in circulating the most irreligious and inflammatory publications. He had him-

self seen the pernicious effects of the doctrines so instilled on some of the misguided delinquents, who had confessed to him, when under examination, that they had been well-disposed members of society, until their principles were corrupted by the poison instilled by those who had enlisted blasphemy in the service of sedition. Such being the magnitude of the evil, the magistrates had become alarmed, and had applied to him for instructions. In consequence of their application, he had referred the case to the law officers of the crown, and the letter, of which the noble Earl now complained, was the result of their opinion. He was ready to avow all he had done, and would take upon himself all responsibility for his acts. He stood now before their Lordships charged with having used his best endeavours to stop the progress of blasphemy and sedition. To that charge he pleaded guilty, and while he lived he should be proud to have such a charge brought against him." Writing, four months afterwards, to the Bishop of Durham, Lord Sidmouth described the benefit resulting from his letter in the following passage: — "The attempt to check the progress of treason and blasphemy, by apprising the magistrates that they had the power of apprehending and holding to bail the publishers or venders of either, was one of the charges brought against me in the course of the last session. Such a charge it shall be my constant endeavour to deserve; and I am happy in being able to assure your Lordship that the activity of the itinerant dealers in these articles is materially controlled, and their number greatly diminished."*

* Mr. Cross, K. C., when he afterwards defended Brandreth, at his trial for high treason at Derby, attributed the insurrections

That such good effects did not immediately result is evident from the subjoined extract of a letter, in which the Duke of Northumberland communicated a series of facts relating to his own lieutenancy, which, as Lord Sidmouth observed in his reply, "left no doubt of the existence of an extensive plan of insurrection." His Grace had now very nearly attained the end of his course, and this was the last letter Lord Sidmouth ever received from him; yet the superior energies of his mind remained unimpaired, and his zeal for his country's service unabated:—

"Syon, March 21st, 1817.

* * * * * *

"From all these different circumstances, I confess it appears to me that a very wide and extensive plan of insurrection has been formed, and which might possibly have been acted upon by this time, but for the proper precautions taken to prevent it. It is to be hoped that the intentions of these infamous revolutionists have been frustrated for the present; but, nevertheless, the constant vigilance of ministers and the magistrates is required to stop the very first appearance of riot or seditious meetings; and your Lordship must

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to the publications of Mr. Cobbett, which he termed "the most malignant and diabolical that had ever issued from the English press. These were hawked up and down the country poisoning the minds of the poor and ignorant, and perplexing the magistracy, who knew not how to deal with the novel and detestable trade in sedition. At last," the learned counsel observed, "the attention of Lord Sidmouth was called to these proceedings, and he thought it his duty (and such I conceive it was) to remind the magistrates that there was no greater evil on earth than such abominable libels, and that a justice of the peace must not stand by till the assizes come round, but must abate the nuisance. His Lordship taught that duty to the magistracy, and I hope in future they will observe it; but, unfortunately, in this case, it came too late."

give me leave to say, that from some extraordinary expressions dropped in a large company at Paris, in the hearing of one of my friends, I cannot entertain the least doubt but we are obliged to foreign Propagandists for the mischief intended us; and that the greatest attention is necessary with respect to the foreigners who are allowed to enter the kingdom and reside in it. I am sure, my Lord, the intended march of the delegates from Manchester to London must too forcibly have reminded your Lordship of the march of the Marseillois to Paris, at the commencement of the French revolution, not to have convinced your Lordship that the copy must have been at least recommended by some person deeply concerned in the original. I have the honour to be, with the highest regard and esteem, your Lordship's most faithful servant,

"NORTHUMBERLAND."

The intelligence received at the Home Office in April was conveyed by Lord Sidmouth in a series of letters to the Prince Regent, who, on the 3d of that month, had directed Sir Benjamin Bloomfield "to congratulate his Lordship upon the encouraging state of domestic concerns, resulting from his unceasing vigilance and wise arrangements." In the first of these communications Lord Sidmouth acquainted his Royal Highness that "the measures of precaution adopted had been successful in preventing the expected disturbance at Manchester, and that there had been no appearance of tumult at Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, and Sheffield, where simultaneous risings were apprehended." One of the measures which his Lordship here alluded to was the apprehension of the ringleaders. "Eight of these," he proceeded to state, "who had been arrested at Manchester, had been brought to London, and he had just signed a warrant for their commitment upon suspicion of high treason." Lord Sidmouth's next communication, dated April 3d,

conveyed news to the Prince Regent that the trials of the Luddites at Leicester had terminated in the capital conviction of eight of the criminals, and "congratulated his Royal Highness upon the prospect of tranquillity and security which this proceeding afforded." This was evidently a case in which mercy to the convicts would have been injustice to the public, and consequently the reader will have anticipated the following conclusion to the tragedy, which Lord Sidmouth announced to his Royal Highness on the 18th:—" * * * It is hoped, and expected, that the execution of the sentence of the law upon the six men who suffered yesterday at Leicester will materially check the prevalence, if not effectually prevent the renewal, of that species of outrage which has so long disgraced the midland counties of the kingdom."

Unfortunately, however, the spirit of disaffection had then risen to a height from which it could not be brought down by a single example. On the evening of the 9th of June an insurrection broke out in Derbyshire, which, however contemptible in its results, bore every mark of extensive organisation.* The imme-

* It appears from a letter which Mr. Allsop, a highly respectable solicitor of Nottingham, and a leading supporter of the government, addressed to Lord Sidmouth on the 16th of June, that the authorities were perfectly aware of this conspiracy, and that Messrs. Rolleston and Mundy, two county magistrates, remained in Nottingham on Saturday and Sunday, the 7th and 8th of June, awaiting "the decision of a meeting of the delegates, which was to take place on the evening of the 7th, for the purpose of deciding on the intended rising on the 9th." The subject debated by the rebel council was, whether or not they should suspend the execution of their project in "consequence of the recent proceedings," the arrest of the leaders, "in Yorkshire." This question was decided, it appears, in the negative,

diate intention of the conspirators was, by a simultaneous rising of the rural population, and through the co-operation of the disaffected population of Nottingham, to obtain possession of that town. In pursuance of this object, a person named Jeremiah Brandreth, alias the Nottingham Captain, arrived on the 8th of June at South Wingfield, a village in Derbyshire, about fourteen miles from Nottingham, for the purpose of heading the insurgents of that and the neighbouring places in the meditated attempt. Having, on the 9th, collected his accomplices, and made such preparations as were practicable, about ten o'clock that evening he and his followers commenced their march towards Nottingham. The band was armed with guns, swords, and pikes; and in order to increase their means and numbers, both of which were miserably deficient, they stopped at the various farm-houses in their way, seizing all the fire-arms they could find, and compelling the male inhabitants to accompany them in their criminal enterprise. In one instance they forced the son of a farmer, Elijah Hall, to rise from his bed to attend them; and in another, when the resolute widow of a farmer, named Hepworth, refused either to deliver up the fire-arms, or to allow her men to join them, they forced open the window-shutters, and Brandreth himself, introducing his gun, shot a servant, named Robert Walters, dead, as he was lacing his boots in the kitchen. Having gathered numbers by such means, until they amounted to about 500, and forming in military array, they proceeded to the

for the rising took place. It was on the morning after that meeting that Brandreth went, or was sent, down into Derbyshire to head the rioters.

Butterley iron works, where ample preparations for resistance had been made. Here they were most spiritedly and humanely remonstrated with by Mr. George Goodwin, one of the managers; who reminded them that the law would assuredly prove too strong for them, and that they were going with halters about their necks. He then offered the protection of the mill to any of them who would return to their duty, and prevailed on three of the party to take advantage of the opportunity. The remainder, finding the mill too well garrisoned to be successfully assaulted, advanced towards Nottingham, in the expectation of joining a reinforcement from that place, which, it had been arranged, should meet them on the road; but not finding it, and being disheartened by this disappointment, some slunk away in the darkness, and the remainder lingered on their way, so that when morning broke they were still at a considerable distance from the town. Meanwhile the greatest alarm prevailed in Nottingham, where the disaffected began to collect in the night, and a few proceeded as far as the race course. The moment it was light, L. Rolleston, Esq., a magistrate of the county, went on horseback to the village of Eastwood, which lay on the road by which the rioters were advancing, and there discovered a considerable body of men, armed with guns and pikes. He immediately returned to the barracks, and procured a detachment of a sergeant and eighteen troopers of the 15th Hussars, under the command of Captain Frederick Charles Philips, with whom he proceeded towards the insurgents, then consisting of about sixty men. When Captain Philips came up to them, he perceived some one attempting to form them across

the road for the purpose of resistance, but they paid no attention to him, and dispersed and fled in all directions, pursued by the dragoons, who took thirty prisoners and about forty stand of arms.* Such was the facility with which this desperate outrage was subdued. Nothing, indeed, could be more striking than the contrast, in all those disturbances, between the daring character of the attempt and the pusillanimous nature of the performance. This was not timidity in the common acceptation of the term; for the fugitives on those occasions were composed of the same ingredients with those who, under legitimate authority and in a righteous cause, had repeatedly defied the whole world in arms. But it was one of the admirable results of the British constitution. It was the homage which treason itself was compelled to pay to the supremacy of the laws of England. The words which Mr. Goodwin addressed to the wretched criminal Isaac Ludlam, whose subsequent execution fatally confirmed their truth,—"The law will prove too strong for thee,"—found an instantaneous response in the hearts of all who heard them. "'Twas conscience that made cowards of them all." This series of offences constituted the subject of a special commission, which, under Chief Baron Richards, met at Derby for the trial of the prisoners on the 16th of October. The recent acquittal of Watson by a London jury, composed, it was reported, of men entertaining a strong party bias, of the crime of high treason,

* Brandreth himself made his escape, and, although a large reward was offered for his apprehension, was not taken for a considerable time. This accounts for the delay in appointing the special commission.

alleged to have been committed by him on the 2d of December, 1816, had made it highly important that the system of trial by jury should be vindicated from any apprehended inability to cope with that greatest, because the most sanguinary and destructive, of all crimes. Lord Sidmouth was, therefore, extremely anxious to prove, by the operation of the existing laws, that the offence of insurrection against the King's government was equally high treason, whether committed by powerful nobleman or humble artisan; and he consequently decided that the indictments should be laid for the high treason and not for the murder. The result of the trials proved the wisdom and judgment of this determination; for after the four principal delinquents had been separately tried, and convicted, nineteen others obtained permission to withdraw their former plea, and pleaded guilty, whilst the remaining twelve experienced the lenity of the crown in the non-production of evidence against them, so that there was not a single failure under the commission. The result was, that three of these wretched men, Brandreth, Turner, and Ludlam, were executed, eleven others were transported for life, and the remainder imprisoned for terms proportioned to their crimes.

This insurrection constituted only a very small part of what had been resolved upon by the disaffected in several midland and northern counties, particularly Lancashire, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire.

The Habeas Corpus Act had only been suspended for the period during which parliament might remain sit-

ting; in consequence, however, of the continued activity of the conspirators, as also of the facility with which the meetings they had meditated at Manchester, with the view of marching, in enormous numbers, with their petition, to London, had been frustrated by means of that suspension, ministers had already decided to apply for its continuance until the commencement of the succeeding session. Accordingly, on the 3d of June, Lord Sidmouth presented certain papers to the House of Lords, together with a message from the Prince Regent, recommending their Lordships to take the same into their immediate consideration. On his Lordship's motion, therefore, the papers were referred to a committee of secrecy, consisting of nearly the same members as on the former occasion. Their Lordships presented their report on the 12th; and as the insurrection in Derbyshire, for which the papers had prepared them, broke out during the interval, it was not surprising that the opinions contained in that document should have corresponded with those entertained by the government. It is not necessary to recapitulate the arguments with which Lord Sidmouth and others enforced, and their opponents resisted, the further suspension of the act, which was passed by the immense majority of 140, the numbers being 190 in favour of the motion, and 50 against it. The bill was afterwards carried by a majority of exactly three to one in the House of Commons, where its operation was confined to the 1st of March, 1818, and with this limitation it finally passed.

It was during the discussions on this subject that

a question arose respecting the manner in which information of the proceedings of the disaffected had been procured at the Home Office, which exposed Lord Sidmouth to much obloquy and misrepresentation. Whether in a free country the detection of malefactors through disclosures made by their accomplices be a justifiable step, or an expedient only befitting a despotic government, depends on the manner in which it is attempted, and is therefore especially liable to the exaggerations of party. No one would deny that for any government to employ artful seducers to foment rebellion in peaceable districts, and convert loyal subjects into traitors, would be an act not only most reprehensible in itself, but also highly inexpedient as a matter of policy, since its own repose and security must depend upon the tranquillity of the country. This, however, was conduct of which Lord Sidmouth was altogether incapable. The whole tenor of his manly, frank, and honourable career, presents a flat contradiction to such a suspicion; and the author is confident that his Lordship would not have stooped even to defend himself from a charge so abhorrent to his nature, had any one, in the paroxysms of political excitement, been so unjust as to prefer it. Lord Sidmouth, however, used always to maintain that at the period in question, when the welfare and security of a great nation were at stake, it was his imperative duty, as Secretary of State, not only to adopt all justifiable means of obtaining information of the plans of the conspirators, but also to accept, and as far as might be expedient to avail himself of, the disclosure of any offence either perpetrated or

meditated, which might be offered to him by parties implicated therein. Secrecy was the only element in which the evil-doers with whom his Lordship had to deal could exist. Their chance of success depended entirely on keeping their plots concealed from all loyal and peaceable men until the moment of action. It was only, therefore, through some confidant that their mischievous intentions could be known and defeated. This, in truth, has ever been the system pursued in this country, under the sanction of the constitution, for the prevention and detection of crime. The law constantly offers both impunity and reward to those criminals who contribute by their evidence to the conviction of their fellows; and it does so on *this* principle—that justice requires it;—that crime could not otherwise be prevented. For it is not, probably, so much in the punishment as in the prevention of crime, that the usual practice of receiving the testimony of one malefactor against another is found most beneficial. The impression which universally prevails amongst evil-doers, that any one of their number will never hesitate to betray his neighbour to save himself, obstructs the formation of plots and combinations amongst such characters, by destroying all real confidence between them, and thus materially conduces to the peace and good order of society. If, then, the British constitution encourages the employment of accomplices as a wise and salutary measure, in unravelling the commonest transactions of criminal justice, ill would it have become Lord Sidmouth, then the chief administrator of the criminal law of the kingdom, not to have adopted the same

precaution; and if, through his Lordship's neglecting so to act, a sudden outbreak (as was too probable) had occurred, and mischief had arisen from the absence of preparation on the part of the authorities, *who* would have more bitterly condemned him than those very parties whose censure he incurred, by listening to informers desirous to make all the compensation in their power by revealing what they knew of the lawless transactions in which they had been engaged? This was the whole amount of the groundless charge against Lord Sidmouth. When Oliver or any other party presented himself to the civil or military authorities, his Lordship received their information, and encouraged them to continue their observations, and to communicate such further intelligence as they might obtain. None of them, however, were employed in the first instance by Lord Sidmouth; but themselves sought him out: and if, which is not probable, they in any instance instigated the conspirators to crime in order to betray them, the treacherous act must have been entirely their own; as nothing would have excited more his Lordship's indignation than the bare idea of so base a proceeding. So entirely, indeed, did his noble nature despise this accusation, that to the close of his life he refrained from taking any step in refutation of it; and hence, with the exception of one or two accidental allusions, his private correspondence contains no reference whatever to the subject. The facts doubtless are faithfully explained in the official records at the Home Office, and to them his Lordship, with the indifference which belongs to conscious rectitude, has intrusted the final justification

of his conduct. In this feeling the author participates: without requiring, therefore, further evidence in refutation he will now present to the reader the substance of the accusation itself. This was contained in a statement given in the "Leeds Mercury" newspaper, which Sir Francis Burdett read before the House of Commons on the 16th of June, and its purport was, that the whole series of plots had been got up under the instigation of agents from London, especially of a person named Oliver, who two months before had introduced himself to Mr. Williams, a bookseller at Dewsbury, as a parliamentary reformer from London. On Friday, the 6th of June, the day on which the outbreak in Yorkshire was prevented by the arrest of the ten delegates at Thornhill-lees, near Dewsbury, this same man again called on Williams, and urged him to attend the meeting to be held that evening, which he declined to do. Those who did attend were all arrested and conveyed to Wakefield in custody, with the exception of Oliver, who, however, followed them to that town, and put up at the inn, where he was recognised by a linen draper of Dewsbury named Dickinson. He shortly afterwards departed in the coach to Leeds, having previously conversed with General Byng's servant, who admitted, on being subsequently questioned, that he had recently driven the gentleman in his master's tandem to meet the coach.

On this basis, Earl Grey, in the Upper House, and Sir Francis Burdett, Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr. Philips, and others, in the Lower, founded a serious accusation against his Majesty's ministers for

having instigated by their agents those disturbances which they were assuming credit to themselves for having suppressed.* Into the accuracy of a statement so vague as this, consisting, in fact, of mere assertion, without a shadow of fact, it is impossible to inquire; but the argument, founded on its extreme improbability, seems of itself quite sufficient to refute it. To imagine, indeed, that a stranger, however artful, coming down alone from London, could by his single voice influence the disaffected population of four great counties, to resolve to rise simultaneously

* The appearance of this statement in the Leeds paper induced Mr. Allsop, who took an active part in preserving the peace at Nottingham, to write as follows to Lord Sidmouth on the 16th of June: — "I feel myself called upon, in justice to Oliver, to make this communication to your Lordship respecting him. The first time I ever saw him was on the 7th of June, on his arrival at Nottingham from Leeds. Although he then knew that a meeting was to take place in the evening, he fixed to leave for Birmingham in the afternoon, and only consented to stay for the meeting at the solicitation of Mr. Hooley and myself, in order to furnish us with the necessary information. * * * Oliver expressly stated to us that his instructions from Sir John Byng were, "not to conceal any thing as to the Yorkshire meeting by which these people could be deceived;" and he also stated his instructions from your Lordship to be, that "he was not to hold out any encouragement." It was then most explicitly decided that at the meeting in the evening he should not, in any way whatever, hold out the least encouragement or inducement to the persons who might be there to take any other steps than such as they might think proper to adopt themselves; and I am persuaded, my Lord, that such was this man's conduct accordingly, for his life was in the greatest danger, their suspicions of him being excited by his refusal to remain at Nottingham and countenance their proceedings, and he only consented to stay at last to lessen their suspicions. Had his life been lost, it would have been because he refused to stay until Monday night, that he might not be considered an instrument of furthering these desperate men in their wicked designs."

against the government, is so extravagant a supposition, that probably it would never have been seriously entertained for a single moment, but for that political excitement which is so prejudicial to the exercise of an unbiassed and discriminating judgment.*

The facts concerning Oliver were correctly stated by Mr. Bathurst and Mr. William Courtenay, on the 5th of March, 1818, when the question of the "conduct of spies and informers" was brought to a final issue in the House of Commons by a distinct motion of Mr. Philips to that effect, which was negatived by 162 against 69. "Government," Mr. Bathurst said, "had no reason to believe that Oliver had upon any occasion forfeited the character of a respectable individual. He had accidentally, in the course of his private business, fallen into society where something dangerous to the state was going on. He found that those he was with had been instrumental in secreting a person" (the younger Watson) "for whose apprehension upon a charge of high treason a reward had been offered." "Having in this manner," as stated

* Such was its effect even on the great mind of Sir Samuel Romilly, that he actually declared in parliament, on the 27th of January, 1818, that, "in his conscience, he believed that the whole of that insurrection" (in Derbyshire) "was the work of the persons sent by government."

In the debate of the 19th of June, Lord Eldon briefly but fully defined the proper principle respecting the employment of informers in the following words:—

"Government," he said, "knowing of any plot was bound to employ such persons, if their aid was necessary, for detecting and defeating it; to stimulate any such individual to go further, was quite another thing."—*Life*, vol. ii. p. 297.

by Mr. Courtenay, "discovered the plots and treasons which were carrying on in the country, he gave information thereof to the government, and offered to go down to the disturbed districts in order to continue his observations on the conduct of the disaffected parties." "The day," Mr. Bathurst proceeded, "when in accordance with this offer he went to ascertain the state of the disturbed districts, was the 28th of April, before which time the risings in the north had been arranged, and warrants issued against the conspirators; for General Byng had stated in his letter to the editor of the 'Morning Chronicle,' that Sir F. Burdett's motion for parliamentary reform was to be the signal for a general rising; and this was some time before Oliver left London."

This allusion to General Byng, now Lord Strafford, whose position as military commander of the disaffected districts must have made him intimately acquainted with the whole subject, designates the present as a suitable opportunity for introducing the opinion of that distinguished officer on this much controverted question. It is extracted from a letter of explanation which the General addressed to Lord Sidmouth from Pontefract, on the 9th of March, 1818, in consequence of some expressions in Mr. Philips's speech in the House of Commons on the 5th of the same month.

After alluding to that gentleman's correction in his recent speech of some misrepresentations respecting General Byng, which he had previously made to parliament, the letter proceeds as follows:—

"In disclaiming, for myself, any employment of spies, I stated to Mr. Philips, as I have done on every occasion, that I never had the sanction of government to do so; that while it appeared to me not alone *proper* but *necessary* for the *magistracy* to have that power, it was not required by *me*, as I was always fully informed of what it was material I should know either from your office or from the local civil authorities. In disclaiming any unnecessary interference of the military on the late occasions, I stated that I had frequently refused the assistance required, which had caused a representation to government; and that I must do *you* the justice to say, that in *every instance you had supported me, and approved of my decision.* Mr. Philips having said, in one of his letters, that he 'conceived there was sufficient to excite the greatest vigilance on the part of government, but not for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus,' I replied, that 'I had, last year (from the information which I had acquired), stated it was, in my opinion, quite necessary; that subsequent events had confirmed that impression; and that I could not so far forget what was due to the government who employed me and to my own character, as to alter my opinion from any unpopularity attached to it.' I could not, of course, expect Mr. Philips to state any part of this: he did all that I could require of him, which was to contradict the false statement he had heard concerning me. But with a proper feeling for the confidence reposed in me by his Majesty's government, and most particularly by your Lordship, I have considered it an imperative duty not merely to refrain from implicating them by any act of mine, but, on the particular subject in question, to defend them when and wherever an opportunity offered. I must say I never knew an individual more unjustly calumniated, than the government have been on this occasion. Had I at any period entertained a different opinion—if I at all know myself—I think that I should not have hesitated in giving in my resignation. * * * I have the honour to be, with respect, your Lordship's very obedient, humble servant,

"JOHN BYNG."

The answer to the above letter will, in justice to the writer and the receiver, be inserted at full length: —

To Major-General Sir John Byng, K. C. B.

" My dear Sir, Clifford Street, March 13th, 1817.

" I thank you for your letter of the 9th instant; though I beg you to be assured that the explanation which it contained was quite unnecessary, as I know your mind to be truly correct and honourable, and that it is not possible for you to lose sight of your public duty for a moment, or to hold in one quarter a language respecting the conduct of government, inconsistent with opinions which you may have expressed in another.

" As to myself, I well know that, unless I had shrunk from a faithful discharge of my duty, I could not have escaped the calumnies of the disaffected or the attacks of the factious: but these may be met without any great exertion of fortitude, provided the well-principled and the loyal are satisfied with the manner in which the trust, which was placed in my hands, has been executed; and I must add, that I am not conscious of having taken any step, during the ferment of the last year, which, under similar circumstances, I should not take again.

" Allow me once more to assure you of the high sense which I shall ever entertain of the value of your judicious and cordial co-operation, and of the sincere esteem with which I am, &c. &c.

" SIDMOUTH."

The importance of the testimony contained in the preceding letter having induced an application to the writer, now Lord Strafford, with a view to its publication, an answer has been received from his Lordship, which shows so clearly the humane purpose for which Oliver was made use of, namely, the prevention of crime, that, with permission, it will now be also inserted, as a full and conclusive justification of Lord Sidmouth's conduct in the whole transaction: —

The Right Honourable Lord Strafford, G.C.B., to the Dean of Norwich.

"Sir, 44. Grosvenor Street, London, Aug. 15th, 1846.

* * * * * *

"I have read the copy of my letter of the 9th of March, 1818, to Lord Sidmouth, and have not a doubt of its correctness. * * * The statement is true, and I do not object to your making use of it in any way you may wish, in furtherance of the object you mention.

"Oliver was sent to me with a letter from Lord Sidmouth*, to the purport that he (Oliver) was going down into that part of the country where meetings were being frequently held, and that he had been desired to communicate to me any information he might obtain as to the time and place of such meetings, *in order that I might take timely measures to prevent their taking place; the wish and intention being to prevent, not to encourage them, as was alleged against the government.*

"I have often regretted that I had not the opportunity to speak in the House fully and fairly what I knew and what I thought; * * * for I entertain a very favourable opinion of Lord Sidmouth's feelings and anxiety upon all the communications I received from him; and I will only add, that when I saw him upon my appointment to the northern district, and found that I had but two regiments of cavalry and two of infantry for that extensive district, I told him I could only make so small a force available by having the best possible information; and before he confidentially entrusted to me that which he might receive, I thought it but fair to state that, having been in constant employment from the age of fifteen, I had had little time for politics; but that if I was to go into parliament I should take the same line my brother did, then in opposition. His Lordship's instant reply was, 'From this moment you have my entire confidence;' and he then told his secretary to let me read every letter he had on

* The only occasion on which Oliver ever waited upon, or was seen by Sir John Byng, was when he delivered this letter. Being late for the coach, which passed at the distance of two miles, Sir John sent him, with a servant, in his gig, which explains the circumstances alluded to in the "Leeds Mercury."

subjects connected with the district; and fully and faithfully he acted up to that reply on all occasions.

"I have the honour to be, &c.,

"STRAFFORD."

Nothing could have been more abhorrent to a high and noble nature than to be obliged to communicate, even indirectly, with parties who, whether originally accomplices or not, were now, in appearance, associating with those whom they intended to betray; and Lord Sidmouth was one to whom such contact would prove peculiarly disgusting; for, through life, he never could endure even the presence of a person he did not respect. Devotion to his king and country could alone have retained him in such a position for a single moment. But at that period the welfare of millions depended on his vigilance and precaution; and he submitted to this, as he had done to many other vexatious circumstances of a statesman's life, solely from an overpowering sense of public duty, and from a conviction that, however irksome the obligation might be, it was one from which those who occupied the office he then held could never hope to be entirely exempt.

It is only necessary to add, that on the two occasions when "the employment of spies and informers," as it was called, was debated in parliament, namely, on the second suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1817, and the passing of the Indemnity Bill in 1818, both Houses expressed their unaltered confidence in the integrity of ministers by immense majorities, amounting in no instance, it is believed, to less than three to one. The whole question indeed was principally one of character, since it was impossible for the government, without exposing indi-

viduals to danger, and the public peace to interruption, to disclose all the circumstances which influenced its conduct; and for this reason, since it *had* become necessary to resort to secret and questionable sources of evidence, it was fortunate that this unpalatable duty should have devolved upon a man so calm, so just, so sage, so fearless, so entirely raised above the influence of all unworthy motives.

At Midsummer, 1817, the Home Department received an important accession in the appointment of Mr., now the Right Honourable, Henry Hobhouse, to an under secretaryship in that office.

Mr. Hobhouse was speedily made acquainted with the anxieties and responsibility of his new office. At the end of July Lord Sidmouth established his family at Malvern, intending to remain there a short time himself, "and then back," as he said, "to sedition and treason again;" his under secretary being left in charge during the interim. Before his Lordship's departure, however, as he informed his brother on the 20th, he "revised all the cases of persons committed and detained under the Suspension Act; and the result, he trusted, would be the release of some upon their own recognisance*, and increased indulgence to

* The Annual Register for July, 1817, contains a long list of the names of parties who were liberated at that time, and supplied with the means of returning to their homes. On one of these occasions, Lord Sidmouth being struck by the honest expression of countenance in one of the prisoners brought up to the Home Office for examination, questioned him separately on the causes of his falling into such evil courses. The kindness of his manner seemed to touch the poor man's heart, and he stated, that "till within the last year and half he had never meddled with politics, had worked hard for his family, attended his church, and lived peaceably with his neighbours; but that since he became connected with the Union Societies all had gone wrong." Lord Sidmouth reasoned

those who could not be released. Solitary confinement would not be continued except under special circumstances." In the first letter which his Lordship addressed to Mr. Hobhouse after leaving town, a circumstance resulting from this investigation is alluded to in the following terms:—"Considering the wretched state of Samuel Haynes's health, I cannot feel satisfied in keeping him in custody, and I therefore request that a warrant may be sent to me for his discharge on bail to appear at the next assizes for the county of Nottingham."

During the present and a second brief visit to Malvern, his Lordship had the satisfaction to ascertain what were the feelings towards him of the loyal and peaceable portion of the community — of those who constituted its real strength — by receiving, unsought, the freedoms of the city of Worcester, and of the boroughs of Tewkesbury and Evesham.

The former circumstance he mentioned to his brother on the 6th of August, in a letter which is here inserted, to show the patient investigation he was accustomed to bestow on the cases of convicts:— "I examined the case of Warren, in consequence of applications from him and others; but I could not find any grounds to justify a remission or change of his punishment. I will, however, look at it again upon my return, but I think my opinion will not be altered.

with him, and, as nothing appeared to criminate him very seriously, and he showed great contrition, he was permitted to return to his home. For this he expressed much gratitude, and assured his Lordship that he would return to his church and never leave it again. Lord Sidmouth had the curiosity to inquire afterwards respecting the man's conduct, and found that he kept his word. — *Family Recollections.*

"Lord Colchester*, who is here, is much better. The neighbours, particularly Lord Beauchamp and Mr. (afterwards Sir Anthony) Lechmere, have been very civil. To-day I dine with the former. * * * Yesterday the freedom of the city of Worcester was presented to me, in due form, in the Town Hall."

The 10th of August found Lord Sidmouth again at Whitehall fulfilling his anxious duties. "Every thing has been well done," he informed his brother, "during my absence, and the country is quiet. Lord Fitzwilliam writes to me that in the West Riding of Yorkshire the disaffected are 'cowed and dispirited;' and there are similar accounts from other parts of the kingdom."

The disaffected had now discovered that the government could neither be deceived nor intimidated, and that the laws, the increased severity of which they had themselves occasioned, could no longer be transgressed with impunity. An abundant harvest, also—in itself no unimportant promoter of loyalty and contentment—added its beneficial influence. At this period, therefore, a marked, but, as it proved, only a temporary amelioration, occurred in the internal tranquillity of the kingdom, which Lord Sidmouth gratefully acknowledged in his communications to his friends. To Lord Kenyon he remarked: "We cannot indeed be sufficiently thankful for an improvement in our situation and prospects, in every respect far ex-

* Recently Mr. Charles Abbot, his Lordship's valued friend and successor in the chair of the House of Commons, who, on resigning the Speakership on the preceding 30th of May, in consequence of ill health, had been deservedly raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Colchester.

ceeding the most sanguine and even the most presumptuous hopes. A public and general expression of our gratitude must be required, in due season, by an order in council."

"Our situation and prospects at home," he observed to Lord Exmouth, "are improving, thank God, in all respects. The materials for disaffection to work upon are less abundant, and less susceptible than at the corresponding period last year."

The advices which his Lordship received during the autumn from every quarter fully confirmed these cheering expressions. "In Devonshire," as Lord Exmouth represented on the 10th of September, "every article of life is falling, the panic amongst farmers wearing off, and, above all, that hitherto marketable article, discontent, is every where disappearing. I was delighted," he proceeded, "to see how the country has uniformly expressed its sense of your Lordship's public exertions, in coming forward wherever you set your foot. These are gratifying testimonials: they flow from a pure source, and not from influence, that bane of all public virtue. In this county all is gladness at the fine prospect of an abundant harvest, and of beautiful weather to save it. I have every reason to unite my voice with my neighbours, to say we owe our present peaceful and happy prospects to your firmness and prompt exertions in keeping down the democrats."

"Notwithstanding, however, the favourable change which had unquestionably taken place in the temper as well as in the internal state of the country, the gang were, nevertheless, actively at work, though with contemptible means and greatly reduced numbers."

These were the terms in which Lord Sidmouth, when writing to Mr. Bathurst, on the 7th of October, alluded to certain "extraordinary circumstances" which would destroy his hopes of making another excursion that year. The *gang* were his old friends of Spa Fields' notoriety, and the *circumstances*, a mad attempt made by them to create a disturbance on Tower Hill on the 11th of October; the failure of which his Lordship thus briefly described to Lord Colchester on the 13th: —

"The plan of attack was changed, and that of Despard adopted. The number, however, which appeared on Tower Hill on Saturday night very little exceeded that which followed the prototype to the same place in the summer of 1802; and they accordingly retired and dispersed conformably to precedent." On that occasion he addressed the following letter to the Lord Mayor, which is here presented as a proof of his foresight in observing the shadows of approaching events, and his diligence in preparing for their arrival: —

"My Lord, Whitehall, October 10th, 1817.

"I think it incumbent upon me to acquaint your Lordship, that if any disturbance should arise within your jurisdiction which may render it necessary to resort to military assistance for the support of the civil power, such assistance may be obtained upon application to Major Elrington, of the Tower of London, who has received orders to comply with any requisition from your Lordship for that purpose."

During the latter part of October, Lord Sidmouth was seriously indisposed; but, as Lord Exmouth shrewdly conjectured, he "derived more benefit from the termination of the Derby trials," the news of which reached him during his illness, "than from all

that the medical men could give him." Anxiety, indeed, though his frequent, was not his constant companion; for, in addition to the reward he derived from witnessing the returning peace and prosperity of the kingdom, his Lordship, at this time, enjoyed another source of satisfaction, in the gratitude and approbation of religious and loyal men. One of these Dr. Adam Clarke rejoiced with his Lordship on the termination of that period, when "without there were fightings, and within fears," and congratulated his country that "peace and plenty were in all her borders, and that every cause of complaint was banished from her streets."

Another letter, equally gratifying to the receiver, conveyed to Lord Sidmouth, on the 26th of October, the following remarks from Lord Colchester: — "I cannot refrain from expressing my great satisfaction at the issue of the Derby trials, as most important to the country in dispelling the mischievous delusion that high treason was an offence for which low persons were not punishable. Also I do most exceedingly rejoice, for the sake of my friend, the Secretary of State, that his judgment has been finally vindicated against all those hesitating and timid counsels which would have inclined to discontinue these proceedings, burying the reputation of the government in irredeemable disgrace. One material advantage derived from these trials is, that they have confirmed the public opinion of the eminent ability of the new Solicitor-General." *

* Sir Robert, afterwards Lord, Gifford, and Master of the Rolls. As this gentleman had risen to eminence by his own exertions, through provincial reputation on the Western Circuit, without

Attention is next arrested by a series of notes, which Lord Sidmouth addressed to his brother from Claremont, the residence of Prince Leopold and the Princess Charlotte of Wales, to which he had been hastily summoned, as a cabinet minister, in expectation of the confinement of her Royal Highness. Of that mournful visit all that will here be mentioned is, that his Lordship arrived at 7 A.M. on the 4th of November, and was not released from attendance until late in the night of the 5th; and that he had scarcely retired to rest in his own house on the morning of the 6th, when a messenger arrived with the fatal intelligence of the Princess Charlotte's death. "Of the persons summoned to Claremont, those who attended were, besides himself, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Bathurst, the Bishop of London, and Mr. Vansittart."

It was Lord Sidmouth's most painful duty on this occasion to communicate the distressing event to the Queen, who was residing at Bath for the benefit of her Majesty's health, and to various members of the royal family, from all of whom he received replies indicative of the deepest sorrow and disappointment. The letter,

enjoying all the usual advantages of London practice in acquiring a knowledge of his profession, his selection to be Solicitor-General, to which Lord Sidmouth greatly contributed, was not, in the first instance, altogether palatable in the highest circles of the legal profession. His Lordship used to describe, very amusingly, Sir William Scott's lamentations on first hearing of this appointment: —"No London practice"— symptoms of chagrin. "No eminence at the bar"— stronger marks of disapproval. "No university education"— lament the last and loudest. Such, however, was the ability and conduct displayed by that very promising lawyer, that, as regarded his appointment, partial disapproval was speedily converted into universal approbation.

in particular, in which Major-General Taylor described the shock which the Queen received on the arrival of the fatal intelligence is truly affecting. "Her Majesty's countenance," he stated, "changed at once. She was unable to utter, but she could not shed a tear." The afflicted state, however, of her Majesty and the Prince Regent is sufficiently described in the following note, which Lord Sidmouth, on the 11th of November, addressed to Mr. Bathurst, who accompanied his Lordship, the Bishop of London, and Lord Melville, on the 19th, to Windsor, to attend the funeral: —

"The ceremony is to take place on Wednesday evening, the 19th, and I hope to see you at Richmond Park on the preceding day. We must attend in full dress. It is probable that the Bishop of London and Lord Melville will take an early dinner at Richmond Park on Wednesday, and we may then all four go together.

"I was near an hour with the Regent yesterday, and I found him collected and composed. He was in a state of great agitation, such as I never before witnessed, on the day of the fatal event, when, in consequence of a message, I went to Carlton House between one and two.

"The Queen has been very much overcome. The Prince Leopold is now become more calm. He means to attend on Wednesday. Of the dreadful event itself, it is hardly possible to write or speak."

Before the close of the year, a painful disappointment befell all serious Christians, in the acquittal, before Lord Ellenborough, by a London jury, of a bookseller, named William Hone, for publishing a series of blasphemous and disgusting parodies on the various solemn formularies of the Established Church, tending to destroy the salutary influence of the ministers of religion, and to bring Christianity itself into

contempt. The defendant was tried on three several indictments on the 18th, 19th, and 20th of December, and was acquitted upon them all. His escape has been attributed by some, to the severe indisposition of the learned judge; and by others, to an impression entertained by the jury that Hone's motives were political, and not directed against religion. But these excuses, even if correct, do not rescue British jurisprudence from the stigma of having allowed one to escape punishment who had wilfully committed the crime of turning into ridicule the chief source of human happiness and human improvement, and of endeavouring to banish from men's minds those wholesome religious restraints which, during the recent war, had created the distinction between the loyal and God-fearing Englishman and that frantic worshipper of the blood-stained goddess of liberty, the French revolutionist. The verdicts, therefore, were totally unjustifiable; and if the more private particulars of this disgraceful transaction could be known, and the personal characters of the jurors be now examined, there can be little doubt that an explanation would thus be afforded.

It should not be forgotten that a government, on such occasions as these, is placed in a very unfavourable point of view. It appears in the character of a prosecutor; the images of past times arise on the memory; the fires of Smithfield, the dungeons of the Inquisition, the cruel execution of penal laws. Amongst the jurors of a great metropolis, in a highly civilised state of society, there must always be found some who are indifferent to religion, and others who are hostile. Such men will go any lengths, rather than encourage the government in what they will call

the practices of intolerance. It is in vain to represent to them the difference between the fair exercise of the rights of free inquiry, and the indecent and wicked abuse of such rights. They will distinguish nothing: they will hear nothing; and, by plausible declamation, they affect the minds of their fellows. Pious and good men, therefore, must consider — and it is a problem which can only be determined by the particular circumstances and difficulties of each separate case — whether it may not frequently be preferable to restrain their virtuous indignation; and, instead of interposing the shield of the law in defence of religion against every graceless and despicable assailant, to leave so sacred a cause to be protected by the good sense and good feeling of society at large. The enemies of the best interests of mankind will thus be defeated; for they will fall into neglect and oblivion, even from the very circumstance of their not having been noticed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1818.

The Prince Regent's Acknowledgment of Lord Sidmouth's Services. Lord Sidmouth receives a Challenge from Thistlewood. The Regent's Speech on opening Parliament. Church-Building Act. Lord Sidmouth proposes Repeal of the Suspension Act — Debate. He answers Lord Holland's Attack on Government. Debate on the Indemnity Bill in the House of Lords. Letters from Lord Sidmouth to Lord Chichester — And from Lord Exmouth to Lord Sidmouth. Illness and Death of Mr. John Hiley Addington. Commission of Inquiry into the Charities of England. Mr. Brougham's zealous Promotion of that Object. Care with which Lord Sidmouth selected Commissioners under the Act. Letter from Lord Sidmouth to Mr. Bathurst on the Subject. Disturbances at Manchester in September, 1818. *Death of her Majesty Queen Charlotte. Letter from Sir Herbert Taylor to Lord Sidmouth, and from the latter to Earl Talbot. Lord Ellenborough's first Illness at Christmas,* 1816. *His Lordship's Visit to Paris in* 1817. *His Letters to Lord Sidmouth. Religious Tone of his Mind — A Prayer composed by him. From Lord Eldon to Lord Sidmouth on Lord Ellenborough's ill Health. Lord Ellenborough intimates to Lord Sidmouth his intended Retirement in consequence of a Failure of Vision. He writes a Letter of Resignation to Lord Eldon. He signs his Resignation. His Death.*

THE mortification which Lord Sidmouth could not fail to experience from the sanction afforded to blasphemy by the acquittal of Hone, and from the apparently interminable nature of his contest with the monster, Sedition, now received a gratifying alleviation. On the 10th of January his Lordship was

informed by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, that "in a conversation on the preceding evening upon the state of public affairs and the effect of the late trials, the Prince Regent had done his high character most ample justice, in applauding the persevering firmness of his conduct throughout the whole of the proceedings, and had spoken of his Lordship generally in a manner the most gratifying." This proof of the approbation of his most gracious master must have encouraged his Lordship's preparations for the approaching session of parliament, appointed to commence on the 27th of January; in which, as he told Mr. Bathurst, on the 30th of December, "the service would be sharp until Easter. The Indemnity Bill," he added, "would of itself afford ample grounds for many and vehement discussions; and, probably, must be preceded by another green bag and another secret committee. There was no necessity, and, consequently, no intention, to renew the suspension." The act here alluded to, it will be remembered, was to remain in force until the 1st of March; but his Lordship told his brother, on the 3d of January, that "all the state prisoners were now liberated except the two Evans's and Benbow, who had refused to enter into recognisances, and accordingly remained in confinement. Some risk would be run by the enlargement of these persons; but not enough, he thought, to justify their detention."

Before the reader enters upon the stirring events of the session, his attention is invited to the singular circumstance of Lord Sidmouth having received, about this time, from the notorious Arthur Thistlewood, who had been one of those confined under the Sus-

pension Act, a challenge to "fight him with sword or pistol." This, when submitted to the other members of the government, at a council held on the 6th of February, was regarded by them as an offence against his Lordship in his capacity of a cabinet minister, for which the party so offending ought to be prosecuted; and they prevailed upon his Lordship, though, as may be inferred from the note from Lord Bathurst given below, with great difficulty, to swear the peace against Thistlewood in the Court of King's Bench*, his principal objection to the step being the necessity of deposing that he had been put in bodily fear. Accordingly, on the 7th of February, articles of the peace were exhibited against Thistlewood in the Court of King's Bench, on which he was ordered to find bail. An indictment was also preferred against him for sending the challenge to Lord Sidmouth, on which he was tried, before Mr. Justice Bayley, on the 4th of May; and being convicted, was sentenced, on the 28th of the same month, to a year's imprisonment in Horsham Gaol.

The Prince Regent's speech on the opening of parliament, which was delivered by commission on the 27th of January, mentioned "the improvement which had taken place in the course of the last year

* "Downing Street, 6th February, 1818, ¼ past 12.

"Dear Lord Sidmouth,

"I came up as soon as I received a summons, but I find I have arrived too late. Mulgrave, however, has just informed me of the subject of the consultation, and of the result. I understand that you are not satisfied with that part of the decision which has required you to swear the peace against Thistlewood. I must say that it appears to me to have been indispensable. * * *

"Yours very truly, BATHURST."

in almost every branch of domestic industry, as a change which could not fail to put a stop to acts of insurrection and treason, which a spirit of discontent had unhappily fomented;" and it expressed his Royal Highness's expectation that "the state of tranquillity to which the country was now restored would be maintained against all attempts to disturb it." At length, also, the patiently cherished hopes of Lords Sidmouth and Kenyon were gratified by the introduction of a paragraph, directing the "attention of parliament to the deficiency which had so long existed in the number of places of public worship belonging to the Established Church when compared with the increasing population of the country."*

* The plan of the government, which appears to have been wisely and carefully prepared, was explained to the House of Lords by Lord Liverpool on the 15th of May, and by Mr. Vansittart to the House of Commons on the 16th of March; and to the honour of both Houses, it passed without any discreditable opposition. The plan was, to vest in certain commissioners appointed by the crown one million of money, to be applied by them to the purposes of building and *promoting* the building of additional churches in populous parishes. This last object was truly important, and it was effected by advancing money, in some cases as a gift, in others by way of loan, to meet and augment sums contributed by individuals for the purpose of erecting churches. By this admirable mode of apportioning the assistance afforded by the state to the zeal manifested by the parties principally interested (which has been successfully followed by the privy council in its grants for the erection of schools), the million occasioned the expenditure upon the same object of (it is believed) double its own amount. Lord Sidmouth received the merited honour of being named on the original commission. His Lordship's first summons to attend the meeting of the commissioners, at which "the rules and regulations were to be considered, and the regulations for the proceedings of the commissioners were to be submitted to the board," is dated November 6th, 1818.

On the day following the meeting of parliament, Lord Sidmouth had the gratification of laying before the House of Lords a bill for repealing the Suspension Act of the previous session, and of moving, after it had been read a first time, that the standing orders should be suspended, with a view to its passing through all the stages that same evening. No opposition, of course, was made; but Lord Holland took occasion to attack the government, on the ground that there was no necessity whatever for the severe measure of the preceding year; "that the evidence on which it had been founded was garbled, and prepared by those whose proceedings it was intended to justify, and that information which ought to have been communicated to the committee had been withheld. That the country was in better circumstances now than last year, he was happy to believe; but whatever improvement had taken place certainly was not owing to the Suspension Act. He trusted that the strictest inquiry would be made as to the manner in which this act for suspending the personal liberty of the subject in a time of profound peace had been executed." To this attack Lord Sidmouth replied, that the report of the secret committee, on the authority of which the act had been passed, fully proved the necessity of the measure: that all the evidence which could with propriety be produced, and quite sufficient to lead to a fair and proper conclusion, had been submitted to the committee, and that great benefit had been derived from the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; and that the favourable contrast which the state of the country now presented, compared with that of last year, resulted from this measure, he was fully pre-

pared to maintain. This, he added, did not rest on assertion: it was already proved. The magistrates in the county of Leicester stated, on their own knowledge, that the passing of the act had produced tranquillity in districts where the greatest alarm had previously existed. In Derbyshire the good effects of the measure had been still more apparent. In consequence of what had then occurred, ten accused persons had fled, four had been sentenced to death, and thirty-one had pleaded guilty of treason.

"These men, besides confessing their guilt, gave certain information that an insurrection much more formidable than the one in which they had engaged was contemplated, and would have infallibly taken place had not the Habeas Corpus Act been suspended. It was that alone which had deterred them. However humble the circumstances of the men concerned in these proceedings, they possessed talents and powers of factious eloquence which gave them considerable influence over the lower classes. That influence, in consequence of the Suspension Act, could no longer be exerted, and no convulsions had since occurred in those parts of the kingdom. He was wholly unconscious of any harsh exercise of the powers entrusted to ministers. The responsibility for the due execution of the act chiefly rested with himself, and he could only say that he had anxiously endeavoured to do his duty leniently but firmly, 'nec temerè nec timidè;' that he had only in view to prevent danger, and had not deprived individuals of liberty any farther than the necessity of the case required. As regarded the prosecution of Hone, great complaints had been made in and out of parlia-

ment of the neglect of ministers in not prosecuting offenders of that description. They had, indeed, long delayed to do so, and had only yielded at last, because they considered the prosecution of the case in question particularly called for by the circumstances of the times."

The bill was carried through all its stages, and sent down on the same evening to the Lower House, where, on the following day, January 29th, it was passed with the same rapidity.

It was about this period that the accusation was brought to a head against Lord Sidmouth of having encouraged a person named Oliver to insinuate himself into the councils of the disaffected, in order that he might reveal them to the government. Nothing, indeed, could be more easy or more natural than for the guilty parties to say that their accuser was also their seducer; and this suspicion once promulgated, it constituted too obvious a weapon of party warfare not to be immediately turned against the ministers by their political opponents. On this subject the first attack was made on the 11th of February, on occasion of a motion introduced by Mr. Fazakerley in very temperate language, but evidently levelled against the suspected employment of spies by the Home Secretary. In the course of the debate Lord Milton spoke with great vehemence against the government, and attributed all "the bad effects which had ensued, to the mission of Oliver, by whom the connexion between the disaffected in London and in the country had, in appearance, been kept up. That person's appearance," he added, "whenever it was made, was the immediate fore-

runner of disorder and confusion." In confirmation of this last assertion, his Lordship especially instanced the West Riding of Yorkshire, of which his father, Lord Fitzwilliam, was the Lord Lieutenant, and who, in the previous December, *i.e.* only six or seven weeks before the day on which Lord Milton was speaking, had forwarded to the government the strongest possible representation of the disaffected state of his lieutenancy. Mr. Canning, in his capacity of cabinet minister, had seen and recollected this letter; and it is a strong proof of his promptitude and ability in reply, that he resolved to make use of it in refutation of Lord Milton. Availing himself, therefore, of the interval whilst Mr. Wilberforce and the Solicitor-General were speaking, he sent a hasty message to Lord Sidmouth requesting that the document in question might be sent down to him at the House. His Lordship was then at home dining with his family; but fortunately Mr. Venables, his private secretary, being still at the office when the message arrived there from Clifford Street, found the letter which Mr. Canning received in time to read to the House amidst much and general cheering. On that occasion, indeed, Mr. Canning made a most brilliant and effective speech; and as his reply to Lord Milton, especially his justification of Lord Sidmouth's conduct, was considered altogether conclusive and triumphant, no disappointment, it is hoped, will be experienced, at the unusual length of the following extract from it: —

"Of the noble Lord (Milton) who spoke early in the debate, he meant not to utter one disrespectful word; yet it was with the utmost surprise he heard the statement he had

made. It had been alleged that, last year, alarm had been not only propagated through the country, but industriously exaggerated by the agents of government; that ministers had procured the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, for purposes of their own, by exhibiting the country in a state of danger and disaffection. But it could be satisfactorily shown that government, instead of outstripping the informations they had received, rather lagged behind them. It was clear that governments could not go on, if they refused to receive information of plots formed against the security of the state. It was equally clear that they must build their belief and shape their conduct on such information as they receive. He agreed that that information was the best, which came under the sanction of established authority, or from an unsuspected channel; and if the noble Lord or his friends could prove that ministers had, by option and preference, accepted the communications of obscure agents in lieu of regular reports from established authorities, then they would make out a real case against them. But this had not happened. He presumed that none would differ from him in thinking that, of all the sources of information, local information was best entitled to credit. He should be glad to know, then, what accusation that government would be liable to, who should receive information of the following description, and yet should obstinately refuse to give credit to it. Suppose a justice of the peace should, in the month of December, 1817, have written to the Secretary of State to this effect:—'I cannot conclude without calling to your recollection that all this tumultuous assembling, rioting, and so forth is *not* the consequence of distress, want of employment, scarcity or dearness of provision, but is the offspring of a revolutionary spirit; and nothing short of a complete change in the established institutions of the country is in contemplation of their leaders and agitators.' If this information had come from some petty authority of an obscure district, would government, even in such a case, be warranted in passing it over? But coming, as it did, from agitated districts, and not only from a justice, but from a master of justices—from the Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of

York—could government refuse it credit? Would they not deserve impeachment if they had done so? Nothing was more common, than, when threatened danger was past, to look back upon it with contempt. When the alarm was once over, fear subsided, and cavil and distrust returned with the means of safety. He challenged the historical knowledge and research of the honourable and learned gentlemen opposite to produce one single instance of a conspiracy, not successful, where, when the danger was over, doubts had not been entertained of its existence. * * * He knew that it would be said that Earl Fitzwilliam, the Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, had since retracted his opinion; but at the time when it was delivered the government were bound to take immediate measures upon it. Such measures had been taken, and had received the approbation of the House."*

The next step in legislation was to carry a measure in which Lord Sidmouth was considered by his friends as having a personal and peculiar interest, namely, "A Bill for indemnifying Persons who had been engaged under the Suspension Act in apprehending or detaining in Custody Persons suspected of treasonable Practices, and in the Suppression of unlawful Assemblies." This was the usual consequence of a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act †, and in this light it

* Hansard's Debates, vol. xxxvii. pp. 338. 395. Mr. Fazakerley's motion was thrown out, on a division, by a majority of 111 to 52.

† One of the reasons of the Indemnity Bill of 1818 was, that although those who had acted under the Suspension Acts of 1817 were fully justified in all they did, they were liable to have actions brought against them by the parties imprisoned, which could not be defended without producing as witnesses those on whose information the accusation had proceeded—a necessity which it was highly expedient to avoid. Power was therefore given by the act to the judge of every court in which such an action should be brought to stay the proceedings. It has been observed by the learned Mr. Justice Coleridge (see note on Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. i. page 136.) that the effect of an act suspending the

was introduced to the House of Lords by the Duke of Montrose, who moved its second reading on the 27th of February. The bill was founded on a report presented on the 23d by a secret committee, of which his Grace was chairman, appointed to examine the several papers which had been laid, sealed up, before the House by command of the Prince Regent. This document recapitulated the treasonable acts which had occurred since the last report, the measures which had been pursued for their suppression, and the warrants of detention, amounting in all to thirty-seven, on suspicion of high treason, which had been issued by the Secretary of State, and which, it declared, "had been fully justified by the circumstances under which they had taken place. On the whole, it appeared to the committee that the government, in the execution of the powers vested in it by the two suspension acts, had acted with due discretion and moderation."

In the discussion which ensued Lord Sidmouth, who did not consider it becoming to argue in favour of a measure in part intended for his own indemnification, confined himself to a decided contradiction of

Habeas Corpus Act (31 Car. II. c. 2.) is not to authorise the crown to imprison suspected persons without giving any reason for so doing; but to prevent persons who are committed upon certain charges from being bailed, tried, or discharged, for the time of the suspension, leaving, however, to the magistrate or person committing the responsibility attending illegal imprisonment. It is usual, therefore, to pass acts of indemnity subsequently for the protection of those who either could not defend themselves in an action for false imprisonment without making improper disclosures of the information on which they had acted, or who had done acts not strictly defensible at law, though justified by the necessity of the moment. This very case of 38 Geo. III. c. 6. is then cited as an instance of an indemnifying act.

the accusations against him for resorting to the system of espionage, and for having inflicted imprisonment on innocent individuals. "As to the former, he said, he abhorred with all his heart whatever tended to weaken the bonds of social intercourse. But when he had the means of saving the country from insurrection through the evidence of an informer, could he, as an upright minister and honest man, reject such information? He only wished that he could, consistently with his duty, disclose whatever had passed between him and Oliver; but he defied any one to say that he had made use of that person in any way repugnant to the strictest honour, or the strictest law. No person had been apprehended through that individual, nor had any steps been taken at his suggestion, or arising out of his disclosures. As regarded imprisonments, there was not a case which produced in his mind a single feeling of self-reproach, nor in which he would not proceed again in a similar manner, under similar circumstances." The remainder of the debates produced no new matter in either House: after first stating, therefore, that the third reading of the indemnity bill was carried in the Lords by ninety-three over twenty-seven, and in the Commons by eighty-two against twenty-three, the subject will be closed with a few extracts from the correspondence, explanatory of the sentiments with which Lord Sidmouth and his friends regarded the question. The first quotation will be selected from the letter in which, on the 28th of February, his Lordship thanked the Earl of Chichester for sending him his proxy, accompanied by "a very kind letter of friendly sympathy. No one knows better than yourself that, in such a situation as mine, it is sometimes necessary to take strong measures,

with respect to individuals, without the possibility of disclosing the grounds upon which alone they can be justified. Parliament and the better part of the public are, however, always disposed to act fairly and justly towards a servant of the Crown so circumstanced; and, next to the consciousness that he has done his duty firmly and zealously, their support is the highest gratification he can receive." From the numerous congratulations which cheered his Lordship at the result of what he himself styled, "his trial in the House of Lords*," one only will be given, from the pen of Lord Exmouth, who had placed "his conscience in his keeping," and was now become one of his most frequent correspondents: —

"Admiralty House, Plymouth, March 2d, 1818.

"I have been quite delighted, this morning, to observe the very large and respectable majority on the question of the Indemnity Bill. It is the triumph of virtue over vice, of loyalty over rebellion; and peculiarly gratifying is it, to every lover of his country, to see the honourable testimony it affords to the purity, benevolence, and firmness of your Lordship's mind. May you thus be nobly supported through your life!"

A distressing period of Lord Sidmouth's life had now arrived. Every page of this biography exhibits traces of the truly fraternal affection which had subsisted through life between his Lordship and his only

* So strongly did he feel this that, out of delicacy, he refrained from using Lord Colchester's proxy, and thus, as he told that noble Lord on the 1st of March, "lost the 'decus et tutamen' of his name and vote. Our last fight," he added, "will be on Thursday, when Lord Grenville will attend to give his cordial support to the bill of indemnity, to use his own words, in a letter to Lord Harrowby."

brother, the Right Honourable John Hiley Addington, so that it was seldom, probably, that the "idem velle atque idem nolle," was more fully exemplified than in their instance. Of this brother it was now Lord Sidmouth's bitter misfortune to be deprived. Mr. Hiley Addington's health had long been in an uncomfortable state; but it excited no serious apprehensions until April, 1818, upon the 22d of which month increasing indisposition obliged him to resign the office of Under Secretary of State, which he had filled, greatly to his brother's comfort and satisfaction, for nearly six years. From that date his vital powers gradually declined, so that when Lord Sidmouth, who had been hastily summoned, arrived at his brother's country seat, Langford Court, near Bristol, early on the morning of the 12th of June, he found that "the fatal result had occurred, without any aggravated suffering, on the preceding evening." His Lordship deeply felt this trying bereavement; and there were many other sincere mourners on the occasion: for, not only by his own kindred, but as a friend, a neighbour, a master, a citizen, the deceased was much and deservedly beloved. Seldom, indeed, can any one be found so well deserving the praise due to an enlightened English gentleman as that truly amiable and benevolent man; who, whether as a promoter of loyalty, a reconciler of differences, or a voluntary servant of the state, both in a civil and military capacity, set an example to all around him, and acquired, to a remarkable degree, the respect and esteem of society.*

* This was quite a year of obituaries. On the 23d of July, Lord Sidmouth announced to Mr. Bathurst the death of his valued

The pressure of official duties affords the servants of the crown but little leisure for the indulgence of the domestic affections, and it was not without much difficulty and inconvenience that Lord Sidmouth could obtain the melancholy gratification of "attending the remains of his ever-to-be-lamented brother to their last earthly abode." One of the duties which at that time claimed his attention arose out of an act passed at the close of the session "for appointing commissioners to inquire concerning charities in England for the education of the poor," which had been recommended by a select committee appointed two years before by the House of Commons to investigate and report on the subject. That committee originated with Mr. Brougham, who was appointed its chairman, and to whom, it is but justice to admit, the country is greatly indebted for much general benefit which has resulted from its operations. The inquiries of this committee had been originally limited to charities relating to the education of the poor; but the bill founded on their report included all the public institutions of England, not excepting, as was understood, the universities, the church, and all corporations, colleges, and schools. The recommendations,

friend, Edward Golding, Esq., who died that afternoon at his Lordship's house in Clifford Street. Mr. Golding possessed all those attractive and useful qualities which conciliate affection without exciting malevolence, and fully merited the following portrait, which his neighbour, Sir William Scott, made of him in a note to Lord Sidmouth: — "Poor Golding! I have this morning been drawing up a short memorial of our worthy departed friend, for the Reading paper. He is a severe loss to this part of the country. The death of such a man is, in all respects, a great laceration to a neighbourhood."

in short, were of a magnitude for which the country was at that time utterly unprepared; and, consequently, by the universal commotion which they would have excited, if fully carried out, appeared in the eyes of cautious persons, more likely to produce injury than benefit. This, at least, was the opinion of several eminent persons with whom Lord Sidmouth was in correspondence on the subject. Lord Ellenborough, in particular, denominated a plan, "printed by order of the House of Commons, and indicating a purpose of erecting a parliamentary trust for all the schools in the kingdom, as a measure big with mischiefs of a most alarming magnitude." The proposed powers of the commissioners, however, were, it is believed, considerably contracted in the House of Commons, and in that of the Lords they were still further restricted to the original objects of inquiry, namely, the charities connected with the education of the poor. They were also prohibited from interfering with any charities having special visitors, governors, or overseers. The bill provided that the board of commissioners should consist of six unpaid or honorary, and eight stipendiary, members, the latter of whom were to be able and active men of business; and, as Mr. Brougham had mentioned in one of the earlier stages of the measure that there was no objection to the commissioners being appointed by government, provided they were not *ciphers*, the selection of those functionaries was, by the act, vested in the crown; and thus, by virtue of his office, devolved eventually on Lord Sidmouth.

Unfortunately, the alterations made in the bill during its progress through parliament did not obtain the approbation of its author, who, with his charac-

teristic ardour, shortly afterwards employed his powerful pen on "a letter to Sir Samuel Romilly," wherein he alluded to "the eminent head of the home department" in terms very different from those which he afterwards applied to Lord Sidmouth in his admirable memoirs of Lord Wellesley, or than, probably, he would even then have employed had he been aware of the scrupulous fidelity with which his Lordship was endeavouring to carry out the purposes of the act.* It can, however, be positively asserted that whilst, on one hand, the correspondence does not contain the slightest indication that his Lordship disapproved of the purposes of the act in any respect, it

* It is truly gratifying to find amongst the Sidmouth papers numerous instances showing that, in this country, how much soever great and eminent men may at times be alienated from each other by prejudice or party, in the end a wise and generous appreciation of character and conduct usually triumphs over less commendable influences. Thus, in the present instance, Lord Sidmouth, by the integrity of a life alike honourable and consistent in office and in retirement, won at length the esteem and regard of Lord Brougham, which the latter manifested not only in flattering marks of respect to his memory, but also in the honourable mention of him in the memoirs alluded to above, the proof sheets of which he forwarded to his Lordship, accompanied by the following very friendly note:—

"My dear Lord, Brougham, Penrith, September 24th, 1843.

"As I have just been correcting for the press our dear friend Lord Wellesley's memoirs (in the third volume of my 'Statesmen'), I thought your Lordship would like to see the just, and most just, tribute which I have paid to your public conduct. I well know that nothing would have more gratified him who unceasingly ascribed so much of his success to your wise and generous support. The other sheets will be sent to-morrow. I have the honour to be, with great respect and esteem, yours faithfully,

"BROUGHAM."

Another instance which occurred long afterwards was that of Sir Francis Burdett, who, at the period now under consideration, opposed Lord Sidmouth with no measured hostility. Satisfied, however, with parliamentary reform, which he had devoted his

bears ample testimony, in the shape of letters of application to eminent persons, to the exertions he made in order to complete the list of honorary members. The result of these is stated in a letter which Lord Sidmouth addressed to Mr. Bathurst on the 23d of July: — "They are attacking me vehemently in the *Morning Chronicle*, but I am satisfied a selection was never made with more scrupulous caution, or with more pure intentions; and I have no reason whatever to be dissatisfied with the selection itself.*

whole life to obtain for the people, the honourable Baronet next found it his duty to stand up in defence of the monarchy, for which he had ever felt the warmest attachment; and thus his loyal feelings naturally led him to seek the acquaintance of Lord Sidmouth. The author well remembers the gratified surprise with which Lord Sidmouth informed him one day, in the spring of 1837, that he had that morning received a friendly visit from Sir Francis Burdett, together with an invitation to meet the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel at dinner at his house. It need scarcely be mentioned, that Lord Sidmouth received the advances of the manly and, as he was quickly convinced, consistent Baronet with much cordiality, and that a friendly intercourse ensued between the parties, of which the following testimony has, amongst others, been preserved: —

"Dear Lord Sidmouth, St. James's Place, July 24th, 1839.

"I am ashamed at looking on your card, and on my own procrastinating habits. * * * Every day have I intended with Sinclair to come to see you, till he has departed for Scotland, and I am left without my conductor. I will, however, certainly have the pleasure of waiting upon you between this and Monday.

"Believe me, my dear Lord, yours sincerely,

"F. BURDETT."

* This alludes to the eight stipendiary commissioners, who, his Lordship told Lord Colchester, "would be selected with the greatest care, and were all to be barristers." Numerous were the applications which Lord Sidmouth received for those appointments. The way in which he proceeded was this. He sent a list of twenty names to the attorney and solicitor general, out of which he requested those officers to make the selection which they considered the best. In that list he had included the names of only two barristers who were personally known to himself, and it

Our great difficulty is in procuring honorary commissioners. To the Bishop of London I applied, but the state of his health and his other business would not admit of his compliance. Lord Grenville has declined; Lord Colchester would lend his name, but little more; the Bishops of Peterborough and St. Asaph, and Manners Sutton, have consented; Sir William Scott and Sir William Grant demur."*

The result of the above "demur" was communicated by Sir William Scott to his Lordship on the 3d of August, in the following words:—

"Sir William Grant and I have had a good deal of conversation about this commission; and we agreed that it is quite necessary that we should state to your Lordship the strong objections which we feel to it upon considering the Act of Parliament under which it must issue, and which makes the office we had agreed to accept a very different thing from what we understood it to be. It appears, most clearly, that there is no distinction at all amongst the commissioners; that there is no power of direction or control lodged in those who do not receive pay; that they all take the same oath of office, and have all the same duties to perform. * * * Having no authority whatever over these gentlemen (who have all equal votes and efficiency with ourselves), we become responsible for all their acts, however indiscreet; and this state of things is so widely distant from what we had conceived it to be, that we think we cannot, with safety, place ourselves in it. I find, from a conversation I have had with Lord Grenville, that he declines acceptance of the commission upon these very grounds." * * *

so happened that neither of those was chosen. — *Family Recollections.*

* Sir William Grant had recently resigned the Mastership of the Rolls, and retired into private life, when, in the opinion of his friends, neither his age nor the unimpaired state of his health, called for such a step. "It was better," he said to them, "to obey the admonition from within than to wait for the observation from without."— *The Author's Recollections.*

It only remains to be observed of this commission, which after having been frequently renewed, especially in 1819 and 1831, finally expired in 1837, that it has most agreeably surprised the expectations of all parties, by effecting, on one hand, a much larger amount of public benefit than its promoters even ventured to anticipate, and inflicting, on the other, none of the evils which its opponents apprehended. It ought also to be recorded to the honour of the commissioners, that they fully justified the judgment and disinterestedness manifested in their appointment, both by their elaborate investigations, and able and useful reports. The last notice which Lord Sidmouth takes of this subject in the correspondence is contained in a note of the 30th of September to Mr. Bathurst:—"You will be glad to hear that the commission is in full activity. The Solicitor-General tells me, that the selection of the stipendiary commissioners is much approved by the profession; and Mr. Manners Sutton, having now had a month's experience of them, assures me that in his judgment a better choice could not have been made. He is indefatigable. His labours, in connection with Warren and Roberts, commence every day at ten, and never end till four."

This year Lord Sidmouth obtained "a furlough" for the month of August, during which he made his usual tour in the west of England; but combinations amongst the spinners and weavers in the town of Manchester recalled him to the "long table" early in September. It was on the 2d of that month the riots occurred which he alluded to on the 11th, in the following letter to Lord Ellenborough:—"The

combination at Manchester, &c. is now nearly dissolved, and tranquillity is completely restored. The verdict of the jury in the case of the person killed in the attack on Gray's mill, the arrest of Johnson, Baguley, and Drummond, who are lodged in Chester gaol, the failure of pecuniary supplies, and the admirable arrangements of Sir John Byng, in conjunction with the civil authorities (one of the chief objects of which was to afford protection to all persons disposed to return to their work), have effected this fortunate change; *but unless the law is strengthened*, there can be no security against the recurrence of combination, and consequent outrage and violence. Still the cessation of this storm is a most important point on public grounds, and a very great relief to myself." The Chief Justice of Chester, Mr. Sergeant Best, when he shortly afterwards charged the grand jury on opening the assizes at Chester, alluded to these combinations in so able a manner that Lord Sidmouth wrote him a special letter of thanks; in which, after stating his own feelings, he mentioned the strong terms of satisfaction in which the Prince Regent had recently expressed his approval of the learned Sergeant's services on the occasion. "I am confident," his Lordship observed, "that the charge had the effect of encouraging the magistrates, emboldening the masters, and disheartening the offending parties, and, consequently, that it materially contributed to the happy result which has since taken place."

The correspondence throughout this summer and autumn frequently alluded to the expected demise of that admirable personage, to whom, for nearly sixty years, the matrons of England had been indebted for

the brightest possible example of every conjugal and domestic virtue—her Majesty Queen Charlotte. This melancholy event at length took place on the 17th of November, to the unfeigned regret of the whole nation, and no one more than Lord Sidmouth, who had been honoured for so many years with her Majesty's most gracious favour and regard. As the letter which Sir Herbert Taylor addressed to his Lordship on the occasion ascribes to her Majesty's piety the submissive devotion with which she supported her protracted illness, there can be no impropriety in presenting the following extract to the reader:—"The Princesses have commanded me to assure your Lordship how deeply they feel the kindness and affection with which you and your daughters have noticed this melancholy event. The loss of the Queen will, indeed, be deeply felt by the whole nation, which cannot fail to do justice to her Majesty's virtuous conduct during so long a period passed under manifold trials; but it will be more particularly felt by those whose immediate intercourse with her Majesty, and close attendance, enabled them to appreciate the full extent of those invaluable qualities which did not meet the public eye. Her sufferings for some time past have been very great, and she has borne them with exemplary patience and resignation, such as a strong sense of religion alone could inspire. *Much of her time was passed in prayer;*"—a salutary lesson this from a Christian queen to an admiring nation.

Lord Sidmouth gave vent to his own feelings on this afflicting event in the following expressions, addressed to Lord Talbot:—"Her Majesty's example had a most salutary and powerful influence during a

period of more than half a century on all the relations of domestic life; and her character will be for ever pre-eminent when compared with that of any of her predecessors. Your Excellency will probably have heard that the will of the Queen, which was signed on the day preceding that of her Majesty's demise, is marked by that considerate kindness and sound judgment which was manifested on every occasion. Her Majesty's personal property is not more than sufficient for the discharge of her debts. This fact, which overthrows the misrepresentations and calumnies which so generally prevailed, ought to be universally known."

The royal funeral took place on the 2d of December; and scarcely had Lord Sidmouth returned from following the remains of his revered and honoured Queen to their resting-place, when he was called upon to fulfil the same pious duty towards the distinguished lawyer mentioned in the following despatch to the Prince Regent:—

"Whitehall, Dec. 14th, 1818.

"Lord Sidmouth has the grief of acquainting your Royal Highness that Lord Ellenborough is no more. The melancholy event took place yesterday evening at six o'clock, without pain, or struggle, or a sigh."

Although Lord Sidmouth did not become acquainted with Lord Ellenborough until he appointed him Solicitor-General in 1801, the intimacy which then ensued immediately ripened into a friendship, of which this fatal termination must not be passed over without some special notice. A few circumstances, therefore, relating to the latter days of this remarkable man, which have been reserved for inser-

tion at this place, it is thought will be interesting to the reader.

The earliest serious symptom of the failure of his bodily powers which his Lordship experienced appeared at Brighton during the Christmas vacation of 1816 and 1817 in a feeling of numbness in his left hand, which at first was regarded by himself and others as a paralytic seizure. When, however, two or three days afterwards the gout attacked the affected member, his own apprehensions subsided; and in a letter written on the 11th of January, 1816, to Lord Sidmouth, he even indulged in some humorous observations on the sensation which the rumour of his indisposition had excited amongst the more aspiring members of his profession.* From that period, however, although he fulfilled his duties, and entered into society, as usual, it is stated in a letter from Mr. Justice Dallas, that "his intimate friends could trace a great change in him;" and especially was this perceptible on occasions when he was required, in the fulfilment of his judicial functions, to strain the higher faculties of his mind to any extraordinary effort. Thus, as appears from the correspondence, his Lordship remained for a long time the object of affectionate solicitude to his family, and

* "The numbness," he observed, "in my left hand was but the forerunner of a very active and painful attack of the gout, and convinced me too feelingly that there was no want of sensibility in that part. The numbness, however, reached town before the pain which followed it, and all last Sunday I was a dead man at the clubs. In the case of a puisnè judge probably the report would not have advanced further than palsy, but out of compliment to the Chief Justice the disorder had a more rapid march, and a more summary and decisive character assigned to it."

also to Lords Eldon and Sidmouth, Mr. Justice Dallas, and other friends; and this continued until the long vacation of 1817, when he went with his family to Paris, for the benefit of change and relaxation. The pressure of juridical exertion thus removed, his constitution, for the time, rebounded, and so entirely, to appearance, were his energies restored, that in searching amongst the numerous letters which Lord Sidmouth has preserved from his pen, for a satisfactory example of his manly diction and characteristic powers of thought and expression, none have been considered so likely to gratify the reader as those he found leisure to write during this visit to Paris. From that number, therefore, the two following have been selected; the former for the indignant mention of the regicidal *ami des noirs*, who had reason to thank the fortunate accident which prevented, possibly, his hearing Lord Ellenborough's opinion of the French revolution; and the latter as describing the first hasty impressions of a Lord Chief Justice of England on witnessing the administration of criminal jurisprudence in a foreign country: —

" Hôtel de l'Empire, Paris, Sept. 1st, 1817.

" My dear Lord,

" The expectations I sanguinely formed of the continuance of fine weather for our harvest, when I wrote to your Lordship from Calais, were sadly disappointed by a succession of heavy showers during the three following days. Since that time — if your weather is the same with that which we have had here — your harvest may have recovered the mischiefs which threatened its destruction. I feel an intense interest on this subject; as I think the peace of the country, and its exemption from calamities of the worst sort, almost entirely depend on the abundance and cheapness of corn for the ensuing winter. I am charmed with the beauty of the public

buildings, streets, and gardens of this place; in all of which there appears to be a great improvement since I visited this country thirty-two years ago. I lament very much that my ability to enjoy these objects is diminished, in a great degree, by infirmity of knees and ankles, produced by various attacks of gout, which disqualify one for walks of any extent. I am almost extinguished by a visit, of some hours, to the gallery of pictures at the Louvre, and by another, yesterday, to Versailles. At the latter place I was shocked with painful recollections of its former state and former inhabitants, whom I saw here in the fulness of gaiety and joy, unconscious of the coming storm. The place is much dilapidated in some of its buildings; but, upon the whole, less so than might have been expected; and is yet repairable, but at a great expense. I was induced to visit Versailles yesterday, because the fountains were to play then in honour of the feast of St. Louis, the badness of the weather having occasioned that exhibition to be deferred from its proper day, the foregoing Sunday. I was sorry to observe that this exhibition, as well as the illuminations at Paris, which took place on the evening of the same day, were regarded by the spectators with a listless indifference, or at least with the ordinary feelings of satisfaction which a *jet-d'eau* or an illumination excites in the mind of every Frenchman, unconnected with the emotions which the day and the occasion were so well calculated to excite. I could see nothing in their countenances beyond the gratified curiosity of a Frenchman; but none of the zeal and enthusiasm which loyalty and a love for a line of princes descended from St. Louis, and which was so lately restored to them, might be supposed to have produced. This morning I met, by accident, with a person of another sort, not merely indifferent to the fates of the family of St. Louis, but who was actively concerned in shortening the days of the murdered Louis XVI. I was returning a visit to Lord Holland, and was shown into a room where an abbé of very grave and respectable appearance was also waiting his coming. He did not talk English, and I very little French; so that we made no progress in acquaintance with each other. Lord Holland joined us soon; and after I had sat some time, I retired.

Lord Holland accompanied me to the stairs, and said to me, as I was going out, 'You have, no doubt, heard of the gentleman with whom you have been in company, but never, I dare say, seen him before: he is the Abbé Gregoire, a regicide.' The Abbé Gregoire is, I believe, the famous *ami des noirs* to whom France and the world, in great measure, owe the calamities and massacres of St. Domingo. * * * I have not seen the ambassador — Sir Charles Stuart — yet, but have had some correspondence with him about presentations, to the King and royal family, of myself and Lady Ellenborough, which will be on the first practicable occasion. Mr. Villiers is here, and has been very obliging in the way of information. We dine at Sir Charles Stuart's on Saturday next. I have been at two of the theatres, but lament that my imperfect knowledge of the language prevents my enjoying them as well as I otherwise should. Lady Ellenborough and the girls join me in best remembrances to your Lordship and the Miss Addingtons.

"I remain, my dear Lord, ever most faithfully yours,

"ELLENBOROUGH."

The peep which has been promised to the reader into a French court of justice will now be extracted from a letter which his Lordship wrote on the 1st of October, when on the eve of departure from Paris:—

"I was present yesterday at a criminal trial for a treasonable conspiracy, in which there was nothing which attracted my approbation but the great decorum and order with which it was conducted, and the silence and stillness of the audience, which nothing could exceed. In the questions addressed by the judge to the prisoner as to his acts and motives, and in his observations and arguments thereupon, and also upon the answers of the prisoner, which ran through the whole of the trial, there was every thing to shock a person habituated to the modes of English trial, or acquainted with the ordinary principles of justice and the means of obtaining truth. The mode of proceeding resembles somewhat the irregular preliminary examinations which with us take place sometimes at

Bow Street; but bears no resemblance to any authorised mode of investigation in the course of any criminal trial. I went with Mr. Villiers, and staid only about two hours. The case seemed to afford materials which might have been made better use of. I sat in court in a very commodious place, below the president, to whom I was introduced. Mr. Brougham and Sergeant Copley sat by me. Lord Glenbervie was also present.

"I hope to reach England by the 20th of this month. I think that my tour has done me good; but the symptoms of gout are still troublesome. I doubt much how I shall stand hard work at present. The nervous state in which I have been for some time past, and the fatigues under which I have long laboured, have affected my eyes very inconveniently. The bracing weather which is now coming on may perhaps do me good. I shall visit Brussels and the glorious field of Waterloo in my way home."

The inspection, however, of his neighbour's institutions, and the observance of foreign places, manners, and pursuits, did not constitute Lord Ellenborough's most important occupation during his visit to Paris. The opportunity his present leisure afforded for self-inspection, and the true light in which he feared not to regard the accumulating indications of declining health, now quickened into still more active exercise those serious religious impressions for which, notwithstanding the incessant interruptions of a professional life, he had always been remarkable. Whilst thus influenced, his Lordship composed, when at Paris, the following prayer, preserved by the filial piety of his Lordship's eldest daughter, of which, at the author's earnest entreaty, that lady has most obligingly sanctioned the publication. A lively appreciation of the benefits which frequently accrue to the cause of religion from the display of practical

Christianity in the lives of great and eminent secular characters has led to this somewhat unusual step. Often have the most pious and beautiful aspirations emanated from distinguished public men; but the present composition exhibits a characteristic not always discernible in prayers originating from such a source, for it distinctly recognises the grand Christian doctrine, that sinful creatures like ourselves can only derive their expectations of future happiness from the mercy of God, through the merits of their Saviour:—

"O God, heavenly Father! by whose providence and goodness all things were made and have their being, and from whom all the blessings and comforts of this life, and all the hopes and expectations of happiness hereafter, are through the merits of our blessed Saviour derived to us thy sinful creatures, I humbly offer up my most grateful thanks and acknowledgments for thy divine goodness and protection constantly vouchsafed to me through the whole course of my life, particularly in indulging to me such faculties of mind and body, and such means of health and strength, as have hitherto enabled me to obtain and to enjoy, many great worldly comforts and advantages. Grant me, O Lord! I humbly beseech thee, a due sense of these thy manifold blessings, together with a steadfast disposition and purpose to use them for the benefit of my fellow-creatures and thy honour and glory; and grant, O Lord! that no decay or diminution of any of these faculties and means of happiness, may excite in my mind any dissatisfied or desponding thoughts or feelings; but that I may always place my firm trust and confidence in thy divine goodness; and whether the blessings heretofore indulged to me shall be continued or cease, and whether thou shalt give them or take them away, I may still, in humble obedience to thy divine will, submit myself in all things with patience and resignation to the dispensations of thy divine providence, humbly and gratefully blessing, praising, and magnifying thy holy name, for ever and ever. Amen.

"*Paris*, 1817."

The benefit which apparently his Lordship had derived from his visit to Paris induced Lord Eldon, about this period, to make the following affectionate and feeling suggestion to Lord Sidmouth: — "There is no object which I have more at heart than the restoration of Lord Ellenborough's health; and it has struck me that if his stay abroad is likely to strengthen, and his immediate return to impede, the hopes of complete recovery, it is our bounden duty to attempt to give him the benefit of a further stay. If he is coming here in the *beginning* only of recovery, I fear he comes too soon." The letter then suggests that, as Lord Ellenborough's "absence for the next term might be fully justified, being equally advisable for the public and himself, his Lordship might be counselled to remain abroad, the Prince Regent first giving his assent." This prudent and friendly advice met, it will readily be imagined, with a most welcome reception in the quarter to which it was addressed; but, before any step could be taken in the matter, Lord Sidmouth received a cheerful letter from his friend, dated Sittingbourne, October 17th, announcing the safe arrival of himself and party at that place, laden with "burnt wood from Huguomont, cuttings from the Wellington tree, and bullets extracted from the groves by themselves, as distinguished from the spurious *exhibits* sold to travellers."

Much, however, as his Lordship was renovated, a return to "those arduous duties of his office" which Mr. Justice Dallas pronounced to be "beyond human strength," speedily justified Lord Eldon's anxiety lest the restoration should not be found complete. This became painfully manifest to the Chief Justice him-

self at the three trials of William Hone, on the 18th of December and two following days, for publishing profane and blasphemous libels. So strongly, indeed, did his Lordship feel the failure of vision on this occasion, that upon his return home he wrote a letter, intended to prepare the government for his early resignation, the foul copy of which he forwarded to Lord Sidmouth, with the following preface affixed:— "The draft of a letter meant to be sent to Lord Sidmouth; which Lord E. begs may be returned to him, in order that it may be copied fair." The letter, as here given, is transcribed from the original draft, in some parts nearly illegible, in Lord Ellenborough's hand-writing. The fair copy, if sent, was, doubtless, either retained by Lord Liverpool, or placed amongst the public documents.

"My dear Lord, Dec. 21st, 1817.

"The disgraceful events which have occurred at Guildhall within the last three or four days have led me, both on account of the public and myself, to consider very seriously my own sufficiency, particularly in point of bodily health and strength, to discharge the official duties of my station in the manner in which, at the present critical moment, it is peculiarly necessary they should be discharged. Your Lordship is, I believe, aware that I have long complained of a considerable diminution of my powers of sight; and though, after consulting Sir Wathen Waller, Mr. Travers, and Mr. Stevenson, I not only have no reason to apprehend any danger of total blindness, but have reason to believe that the optic nerve is not in any manner injured; yet, inasmuch as the inconvenience and difficulty I feel in taking notes in court and in immediately referring to and using them there, occasions a very painful impediment to the prompt and efficient discharge of my public functions, I have for some time meditated on the duty which this circumstance appeared to

impose upon me, both in respect to the public and myself, to retire from an office which I could no longer execute to *their* full satisfaction or *my own*. I do not mean that I have received as yet any intimation whatever of dissatisfaction on this account from any quarter; but I am sensible of, and alarmed at, my own defect in the particular I have alluded to, and think it proper to obviate any public inconvenience or public or private censure, by retiring in time. I have therefore taken the liberty of announcing to your Lordship that I wish to carry my meditated purpose of resignation into effect as soon as the convenience of government in regard to the due selection and appointment of my successor may allow. I have to request, therefore, that your Lordship will have the goodness to communicate this my purpose to your colleagues, Lord Liverpool, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Castlereagh, and after it has received their consideration, to submit it, with all humility, to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to whose gracious condescension, in the favourable acceptance of my imperfect services, I have been so much and so long indebted. It is my anxious wish to occasion no embarrassment to his Royal Highness's government by the execution of the purpose I announce; and I will therefore postpone it till an arrangement perfectly satisfactory shall have been made for filling up the vacancy my resignation will occasion. I do not think it necessary to request your Lordship and the other members of his Royal Highness's government, and I trust that I have no occasion to request his Royal Highness himself, to acquit me of the baseness of deserting the public service in a moment of apprehended difficulty and danger. In the mean time, and until my purpose shall be carried into full effect, my labour and attention shall be addressed to the discharge of my official duties, as it has been for years long past; trusting that any imperfection which may occur in their discharge from the infirmity I have mentioned, or from any other, may receive at their hands the most candid allowance. I have the honour to be, with the most sincere regard and esteem, my dear Lord, your very faithful and obliged humble servant,

"ELLENBOROUGH."

To the above deeply interesting communication Lord Sidmouth, on the same day, returned this affectionate reply: —

"My dear Lord, Richmond Park, Dec. 21st, 1817.

"I have perused the draft of your intended letter with all the feeling which it was so well calculated to excite. Your public career will live 'in æternitate temporum, famâ rerum*;' but it is not yet at its close, for a sufficient successor is not, I am convinced, at present to be found. But time will be given for inquiry and consideration on the part of the government, and for some progress towards fitness for the situation on the part of those who can alone be thought of as at all competent to fill it. Sir William Scott is come; much chagrined at late events, but pleased to hear that you had not suffered.

"I am ever, my dear Lord, most sincerely yours,

"SIDMOUTH.

"P. S. There is a passage or two in your letter in which you appear to me too solicitous to *disclaim* what no one could, by any possibility, *impute*."

As the importance of Lord Ellenborough's services, and the extreme difficulty of providing a competent successor, must have been universally felt, the anxiety with which the government looked forward to the impending resignation may be readily imagined. The dreaded period, however, did not arrive until the 18th of September, 1818, on which day Lord Sidmouth received from Lord Ellenborough a copy of his final letter of resignation, as published in the "Life of Lord Eldon," enclosed in the following note: —

"My dear Lord, Worthing, Sept. 18th, 1818.

"Before I send the letter herein copied, which I have been long meditating to send to the Lord Chancellor, as the

* Tacit. Agric. p. 46.

proper channel of such a communication between the Prince Regent and his judges, I thought I might venture upon first transmitting it to your Lordship, in order to have your opinion upon its form and manner. For the necessity of the measure itself I am responsible, in truth and conscience, and most painfully do I feel myself, upon every ground, obliged to adopt it. I will beg the favour of an early answer; upon receiving which, my letter to the Chancellor will be forwarded. Yours most faithfully,

"ELLENBOROUGH."

Lord Sidmouth's reply to this letter has not been preserved; but its tenor is obvious, from the fact that the resignation itself, corresponding verbatim with the draft first mentioned, was forwarded to Lord Eldon on the 21st of September. On some day previous to the 19th of October, the noble patient was removed to St. James's Square, as on that day Lord Sidmouth had there a satisfactory interview with his suffering friend. On the 20th, however, he had the mortification of learning from Lady Ellenborough that "the grateful excitement of yesterday had exhausted the spirits of her dear Lord, and that he had again sunk into the same state of depression under which he had laboured before the happy meeting." Lord Ellenborough now became "anxious for the appointment of his successor." Accordingly, on the 29th of October, Lord Eldon and Lord Sidmouth waited upon him with the form of resignation, which, "though his mind was in a very infirm state, and his hand weak and unsteady, he was still able to sign." Lord Sidmouth described the circumstances of this interview to Mr. Bathurst on the 1st of November in the following passage: — "You will have learnt from the papers that Abbott is to preside in the King's Bench,

and Dallas in the Common Pleas. Both situations were offered to Shepherd, and the latter to Gifford. Poor Lord Ellenborough is declining rapidly. Mind and body appear to become weaker every day. On Thursday he signed the instrument of his final separation from public life. Lady Ellenborough, with her two elder daughters, and her two elder sons, were present, besides the Chancellor and myself. It was an extraordinary and trying scene. The Chancellor, who had not seen Lord E. for more than two months, felt it almost overpowering." To Lord Ellenborough the step from resignation to the grave was short indeed. Only six weeks elapsed ere Lord Sidmouth informed their common friend, Mr. Bond, that "the frame of adamant and the soul of fire" were lifeless.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1818, 1819.

Letter from the Earl of Sheffield to Viscount Sidmouth. The Duke of Wellington enters the Cabinet. Opening of the new Parliament. Business of the Session. Progress of Disaffection. Letter from Lord Sidmouth to Lord Fitzwilliam. Great Meeting at Birmingham. Sir Charles Wolseley elected a Legislatorial Attorney. A Constable shot. Lords Lieutenant at their Posts. Letters from the Dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire. Meeting appointed in Manchester for the 16th of August. Preparations. Difficulty of ascertaining the precise Moment to quell a Riot. Instructions given by Lord Sidmouth prior to the Meeting. Preparations made by the Magistrates at Manchester. Sir William Jolliffe's Account of the Military Proceedings on the Day of the Meeting. Sentiments of Lord Sidmouth on receiving the Intelligence. He considers it his Duty to support the Magistrates. His Letter to the Lords Lieutenant, conveying the Regent's Thanks to the Magistrates. His Argument in Defence of this Step. Letter from Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, conveying the high Approbation of the Prince Regent. Hunt and his Associates indicted for Conspiracy. Bills found. The Opposition strongly disapprove of the Conduct of the Magistrates and the Government. They commence the System of calling public Meetings. Address of the City of London utterly inconsistent with the Facts. Yorkshire County Meeting. Dismissal of Lord Fitzwilliam. That Step approved by Mr. Banks — And Mr. Wilberforce.

In pursuance of the principle already laid down, of introducing, if possible, into this work some memorial of each of Lord Sidmouth's principal correspond-

ents, a letter will now be presented, selected from many others upon the same or similar subjects, which, from time to time, Lord Sidmouth received from the Earl of Sheffield.* These documents manifest, in some instances, a degree of intelligence, forethought, and practical adaptation of remedies to evils, which anticipated the spirit of improvement then arising in the land; and hence their exclusion from this biography has been acceded to with regret. Considering, however, the interest still attached to the subjects discussed in it, no reader, it is hoped, will regard as an unwelcome intruder the subjoined letter, which, at the age of eighty-three! the sagacious and venerable writer addressed to Viscount Sidmouth: —

"My dear Lord, Sheffield Place, Dec. 13th, 1818.

"Although I doubt not your Lordship has ample information, I cannot resist the pleasure of communicating the very satisfactory accounts I have received from different parts, of the state of trade and manufactures, and particularly from the neighbourhood of Birmingham, Warwickshire, and Staffordshire. Both trade and manufactures are in a flourishing condition, and likely to improve still further. There appears to be little speculation beyond the regular demands of the different markets, men without adequate capital finding it almost impossible to procure credit; so that there is now no disposition to force a trade, and no injurious competition among the merchants to procure the execution of orders, and, conse-

* Lord Sheffield, who was previously an Irish baron, received an English barony in 1802, from Mr. Addington, who said, many years afterwards, that his Lordship and Lord Arden were the only peers he had created, except in direct testimony for public service. Lord Sheffield died in May, 1821, at the advanced age of eighty-six.

quently, wages are fair and reasonable. I conceive that things cannot be in a much better train either for the merchant or manufacturer, not so for the constitution or agriculture of the country: the first, I fear, is *en décadence*; the case however of the latter is somewhat better than it was, though far short of that of the trading part of the community. The demand for land is considerably increased, but in many instances at reduced rents. Agriculture, the most essential of all concerns, is so extremely depressed by the great increase of tithes and of parochial rates, that I cannot refrain from being its strenuous advocate: and so strongly am I impressed with the evil consequences of the excessive load of such taxation on the landed interests, and particularly on the occupiers in the southern and midland parts of England, that it is wonderful to me that agriculture has not been in those districts annihilated; and there is nothing of which I am more thoroughly convinced than the necessity of affording it every relief and encouragement possible. I do not conceive that the subject of the corn laws can be renewed at present with advantage. The ignorance and supineness of the land-owners generally is so excessive; the violence of the middling and lower classes so overbearing; the use made of it by the popularity hunters of all descriptions so pernicious and vile; the fears of government so great, and at the same time so natural, that, upon the whole, I do not entertain a hope of any beneficial results, from any efforts that are now making, or may be made, for a considerable time. It is greatly to be regretted, however, that in the last correction of the corn laws, foreign grain, under any circumstances, should be admitted duty free: it would have been sufficient to have lowered the import duties, as to wheat, when the price in our market was 5*l.* per quarter; but I by no means wish ministers so soon to be embroiled again on that subject, nor do I think, earnest as I am on this head, that this is the proper time to renew the discussion, or to attempt a change with respect to the duties. I would not, however, wish to damp the ardour of those who urge the principle, that every thing arising from the soil, and every manufacture of the country, should be protected by adequate import duties; as

that principle is generally observed with regard to every article except wool, and must be in a country so heavily tithed, and necessarily burdened with such an extraordinary degree of taxation. Previously to the year 1793, no direct or assessed tax, affecting agriculture, was tolerated, and surely it is now expedient, whenever possible, to relinquish those taxes which particularly affect that most essential interest of the country, and to adopt such other measures as will enable it to support the heavy imposts which fall upon it. The legislature might now show attention to the grievances of the occupiers of land, by relinquishing all the direct taxes imposed on agriculture during the late war; and it will only be common justice to protect the wool of the country from being debased in value, by the import of wool from every part of the world free of duty, and it is not difficult to demonstrate that a moderate duty on the import of foreign wool would not affect, even in a slight degree, the great mass of our woollen manufacture. * * * The levity of the public on the most interesting and important subjects is often not only very extraordinary, but even ridiculous. The well-founded alarm on the ruinous and impolitic management of the poor, which appeared to make a deep and general impression, seems now to be forgotten except by the oppressed occupiers of lands, who so severely feel the effects of it. The public mind is not yet ripe for such a great measure as might prove an effectual remedy; but in the mean time I think something might be done. Is your Lordship disposed to repeal all the laws relating to the poor (heterogeneous, discordant, impracticable, unintelligible, and absurd as they are,) to the 43d of Elizabeth, and to re-enact all those parts of them which the circumstances of the times may require, (defining the powers of the magistrates, the parish officers, and the claims of the poor,) and form them into a regular intelligible code? for I verily believe there is not one magistrate, nor any clerk (who governs him) who is acquainted with them all. I believe I am one of the oldest magistrates in the kingdom, being in my fiftieth year, and yet I have never met with any man who seemed fully acquainted with them. If an intelligent select committee, having a practical know-

ledge of the subject (without which the ablest men are not competent to it), could be induced to undertake this work, I have no doubt but that a law could be so framed as to lead to a great amelioration of our present vile system, if not gradually to a complete remedy. But I must not impose more of my notions on your Lordship. You must be now quite tired of me. If you think there is any thing in this letter worthy of Lord Liverpool's attention, I wish it to be communicated to him; but as I inflicted on his Lordship some time ago a large dose respecting the poor, I refrain from a direct communication. I am, seemingly, as well as ever I was; but I must not risk myself in town before the end of March, except for two nights on the meeting of parliament, in order to take my seat and enable me to leave a proxy. I have the honour to be, with very sincere regard, my dear Lord, most truly your Lordship's faithful servant,

"SHEFFIELD."

At the commencement of the eventful year 1819, Lord Sidmouth passed a few "most agreeable days," on a visit to the Prince Regent, at Brighton. The opening of parliament, however, by commission, on the 21st of January, recalled him to his official preparations for the longest and sharpest campaign he had yet been engaged in against fear and disaffection. The speech with which the new parliament was greeted contained, perhaps, a more flattering picture of the "flourishing condition" of the country than was altogether warranted by subsequent events, and it recommended *one* measure, namely, a material reduction in the military establishments of the country, which added greatly to the difficulties in which Lord Sidmouth immediately afterwards found himself placed.* But whilst the means which the govern-

* Lord Sidmouth always deprecated this experiment, which proved so extremely inconvenient, that, after persevering for four

ment possessed of suppressing insurrection were thus unfortunately diminished, it received a vast addition to its moral strength in the counsels and experience of the Duke of Wellington, who, being released from his high and important command by the removal of the army of occupation from France, now, for the first time, took a seat in the British cabinet. The state of the country, which was daily becoming more formidable, effectually debarred Lord Sidmouth from engaging prominently in the general business of the session, which terminated on the 13th of July. All that will be presented to the reader, therefore, on that subject is the following brief summary, addressed by his Lordship, on the 21st of June, to Lord Exmouth; from which it appears that some little distrust was at first entertained of the disposition of the new parliament: — "The close of our parliamentary campaign is far more satisfactory than its commencement. The government has now received decisive proofs of that degree of confidence without which it could not be conducted honourably to ourselves, or usefully to the public. Your proxy was placed in the hands of my friend, Lord Powis, my own being full. I was desirous of Captain Pellew's * attendance on the 7th of June, and for a few subse-

years, the government were obliged, in 1823, to relinquish it, and to augment the army.

* Captain the Hon. Pownoll Bastard Pellew, R.N., afterwards the second Viscount Exmouth, represented the town of Launceston in parliament from 1812 to 1829. The subject under debate on the 7th of June, which appears to have been the first real trial of strength in the new parliament on a vital question, was Mr. Vansittart's "resolutions relating to the public income and expenditure." They were carried by 329 over 132.

quent days; but was unwilling to suggest it, fearing it might be inconvenient to him to leave his duty."*

The leaders of disaffection had now advanced another stage in the march of revolution, and found themselves enabled to extend the excitement of their deluded followers from the destruction of mills and machinery, and animosity against their employers, to subjects of a political nature. They therefore assumed, for the first time, the name and character of Radical Reformers; and endeavoured to dishearten the loyal, and encourage the rebellious, by collecting immense numbers together at public meetings in populous places, for the avowed purpose of electing parliamentary representatives, but with the real object of creating disturbance and apprehension. One of these assemblages, which occurred at Hanslet Moor, near Leeds, was the occasion of the last private and confidential letter which, it is believed, Lord Sidmouth addressed to Earl Fitzwilliam. It is dated July the 24th, and expresses "great satisfaction at learning that the meeting last Monday was less numerous, and the language of the orators less violent, than at the former meeting at the same place. The turbulent and disaffected in the country," his Lordship proceeds, "will not derive encouragement from the proceedings on Wednesday last in Smithfield; and I trust we may look forward with well-grounded hopes to such an increased demand, at no distant period, for the exertions of industry, as will reduce within very narrow limits the influence of those whose

* His Lordship received the freedom of the city of London from the Merchant Tailors' Company on the 10th of March in this year.

sole object is the subversion of our established institutions."

The meeting in Smithfield was one over which Hunt had presided, and which ended without disturbance; but at an immense assemblage at Birmingham, on the 12th of July, Sir Charles Wolseley, a Staffordshire baronet, was elected legislatorial attorney and representative in parliament of that town.

Government now found it indispensably necessary to exercise whatever power the law might possess in putting a stop to these alarming proceedings. Accordingly, Sir Charles Wolseley and a dissenting preacher, named Harrison, were arrested, by a constable by name Birch, for seditious words spoken by them at public meetings; which act of lawful authority the disaffected resented by shooting poor Birch in the open street, outside the court-house, at Stockport, at the very time when the magistrates were examining the prisoners within. At this period, it should be remembered, there was no suspension act, the army had been largely reduced, and the law for the suppression of riots, in itself not very intelligible, was almost universally misunderstood. No wonder, then, that, as Lord Sidmouth complained to Lord Lonsdale, "the existing laws should be found inadequate to the difficulties and dangers with which the government had at that time to contend, and which could only be overcome by the law or the sword." At this conjuncture most of the lords lieutenant proceeded to their posts*, and the Duke of De-

* On the 15th of August, the Duke of Newcastle wrote to Lord Sidmouth from Stevenage, on his way down to his lieutenancy, in these memorable words: —

"I am very sorry that I have not had the advantage of con-

vonshire, "who had just returned to England after a long absence, expressed to Lord Sidmouth his readiness to set out for Derbyshire immediately on receiving an intimation from his Lordship to that effect." We have now reached the eventful month of August, and so anxious was the moment that Lord Sidmouth could only get away from his office from Friday to Tuesday, in order to establish his family at Broadstairs for a few weeks. From that place he wrote to Lord Exmouth on the 15th, that "the laws were not strong enough for the times, but that they must be made so, if it were meant to afford the country a reasonable hope of permanent tranquillity. The plentiful season was, however, unfavourable for sedition, and at Manchester there was, happily, an increased demand for labour. The magistrates, too, were roused into exertion, and the laws were enforced with vigour in most of the disturbed districts."

On the day succeeding that on which the above remarks were penned, a circumstance occurred in the place mentioned therein, which was subjected to more misrepresentation, and exposed Lord Sidmouth to a greater amount of undeserved obloquy, than any other event of his life. Following the examples of Birmingham and Leeds, the reformers of Manchester had ventured to appoint a public meeting for Monday, the 9th of August, to elect a legislatorial attorney as representative of that place; but on the magistrates issuing a notice declaring such an assemblage to be

versing with your Lordship immediately before leaving London. However, pray remember that I am always ready, and that I will punctually, faithfully, and fearlessly perform every known duty. In the hour of danger or adversity you may rely upon me. More I will not add, but I think it right to repeat this declaration."

illegal, "and requiring the people to abstain from attending it at their peril," they relinquished that design, and advertised another meeting to be holden in St. Peter's Field, in Manchester, on Monday, the 16th of August, for the purpose of petitioning for a reform of parliament. It was now evident, even to the least observant, that a crisis had arrived. On the part of the disaffected no efforts were omitted to impress a formidable character on their approaching meeting. Nocturnal drillings were carried on throughout the neighbourhood to a great extent, on pretence of marching to the meeting in better order; but, as Mr. Norris, the police magistrate, observed, "military discipline was not requisite for that purpose, and a more alarming object was so palpable, that it was impossible to mistake it." In short, as the grand jury at the quarter sessions at Salford observed, in their address to the magistrates, "the restless spirit of sedition had at length matured its designs, and was now assuming a tone of defiance, and pursuing a system of organisation which indicated an approaching effort to involve the country in all the horrors of a revolution." It is scarcely necessary to observe that the government afforded the local authorities all possible assistance in their preparations to avert this approaching storm; that a strong military force was collected at Manchester, and that Lord Sidmouth was in constant communication with the magistrates. But "in periods of disorder and approaching insurrection," as Mr. Bond at this time observed to his Lordship, "the most difficult and important point is to ascertain to what extent you shall allow the evil to proceed: for unless there is enough done to indicate great and threatening danger, the better classes will

not be convinced of the necessity of interference; you can never, therefore, call the law into execution with any good effect before the mischief is in part accomplished." Unquestionably the responsibility of deciding this "difficult and important point," though on this occasion unjustly cast upon Lord Sidmouth, belonged in reality to the local magistrate, who on all ordinary occasions acts entirely on his own individual authority, and when necessary, can exclusively authorise the military to act as his coadjutors for the suppression of riots, without in any way referring to the Secretary of State, or deriving additional authority from him. In corresponding, therefore, with the local authorities in districts where riots are expected, the Secretary of State can only offer his advice, and even that is obviously impossible in cases requiring immediate decision.

For these reasons Lord Sidmouth issued no express directions to the magistrates of Manchester as to the employment of the military. The substance of the communications he made to them immediately previous to the 16th of August is wholly comprised in the following summary carefully extracted from copies of those documents.

The magistrates having announced their intention to put in force the Watch and Ward Act (52 Geo. III.), his Lordship, on the 2d of August, "approved of that resolution, and would not doubt that, filled as that part of England was with military, there would be found energy to act on that statute." Writing, three days afterwards, respecting the meeting appointed for the 9th, which was subsequently postponed, he told them that "he expected occasion to

arise for their energy to display itself, and that they may feel assured of the cordial support of the government." On the 7th he suggested their "availing themselves of the postponement of the expected meeting, to put forth a monitory and conciliatory address to the lower classes." On the 12th he expressed himself "not surprised that the magistrates had, under the belief that the postponed meeting was really about to take place, desired Sir John Byng's attendance; but glad, as the event proved, that he had been prevented from answering their call."

Thus general and concise were the previous communications between Lord Sidmouth and the magistrates. *He* relied with encouraging confidence on their best exertions; *they* fully depended on his Lordship's support in every honest attempt to discharge their duty; and *both* expected from the public a friendly construction of their conduct, and a just and reasonable appreciation of the difficulties of their position.

The preparations of the magistrates, which corresponded with those made on other occasions when they anticipated tumultuary meetings, were arranged as follows: — A special committee of their body had been in constant attendance for the three preceding days, and had resolved not to stop the numerous columns expected to pour in from various roads, but to allow them to reach the place of their destination. The military were put in requisition, and a corps of yeomanry was sent for from the adjoining county of Cheshire: the magistrates established themselves in a house on one side of the area of St. Peter's Field, where they commanded a full view of the pro-

ceedings: one of them, Mr. Trafford Trafford, accompanied the commanding officer on the field, and two hundred special constables surrounded the hustings, which consisted of two waggons placed in the centre of the area, and kept open a communication with the house in which the magistrates were stationed.

Attention must now be directed to the military proceedings, of which the reader is presented with a circumstantial narrative, most obligingly supplied by Sir William J. H. Jolliffe, Bart., M. P., who, as a lieutenant in the 15th Hussars, was himself an actor in the scene he has so ably described. The statement has received the entire approval of Edward Smyth, Esq., of Norwich, who commanded a troop of the Macclesfield squadron of the Cheshire yeomanry corps on that memorable day, and whose remarks on the circumstances mentioned in it are attached, in the shape of notes, to the parts to which they relate: —

"My dear Sir, 9. St. James's Place, April 11th, 1845.

"Twenty-five years have passed since the collision unfortunately occurred between the population of Manchester and its neighbourhood, and the military stationed in that town, on the 16th of August, 1819.

"I was, at that time, a lieutenant in the 15th King's Hussars, which regiment had been quartered in Manchester cavalry barracks about six weeks. This was my first acquaintance with a large manufacturing population. I had little knowledge of the condition of that population; whether or no a great degree of distress was then prevalent*, or whether or no the distrust and bad feeling, which appeared to exist between the employers and employed, was wholly or

* Captain Smyth does not believe there was.

in part caused by the agitation of political questions. I will not, therefore, enter into any speculations upon these points; but I will endeavour to narrate the facts which fell under my own observation, although acting, as of course I was, under the command of others, and in a subordinate situation. The military force stationed in Manchester consisted of six troops of the 15th Hussars, under the command of Colonel Dalrymple; one troop of horse artillery, with two guns, under Major Dyneley; nearly the whole of the 31st regiment, under Colonel Guy L'Estrange* (who commanded the whole force as senior officer). Some companies of the 88th regiment, and the Cheshire yeomanry †, had also been brought into the town, in anticipation of disturbances which might result from the expected meeting; and these latter had only arrived on the morning of the 16th, or a few hours previously; and, lastly, there was a troop of Manchester yeomanry cavalry, consisting of about forty members, who, from the manner in which they were made use of (to say the least), greatly aggravated the disasters of the day. Their ranks were filled chiefly by wealthy master manufacturers; and, without the knowledge which would have been possessed by a (strictly speaking) military body, they were placed, most unwisely, as it appeared, under the immediate command and orders of the civil authorities.

"Our regiment paraded in field-exercise order at about half-past eight, or, it might be, nine o'clock, A. M. Two squadrons

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* Unfortunately Sir John Byng, the General of the district, not having been previously sent for, was at his head quarters at Pontefract. An express, however, was afterwards despatched to him, and he arrived in the night of the 16th and 17th at Manchester, from whence he transmitted Colonel L'Estrange's official report to Lord Sidmouth. Sir John stated in his own letter that "he hoped his Lordship would approve of the Lieutenant-Colonel having employed the corps of Cheshire yeomanry and the Manchester troop, who, at the request of the magistrates, had assembled with the greatest alacrity in full numbers."

† The Cheshire yeomanry consisting of six troops, and comprising between 300 and 400 men, were commanded by Colonel Townshend, and had marched on the same morning from Knutsford.

of it were marched into the town about ten o'clock. They were formed up and dismounted in a wide street, the name of which I forget, to the north of St. Peter's Field (the place appointed for the meeting), and at the distance of nearly a quarter of a mile from it. The Cheshire yeomanry were formed, on our left, in the same street. One troop of our regiment was attached to the artillery, which took up a position between the cavalry barracks and the town; and one troop remained in charge of the barracks.

"The two squadrons with which I was stationed must have remained dismounted nearly two hours. During the greater portion of that period, a solid mass of people continued moving along a street about a hundred yards to our front, on their way to the place of meeting. Other officers, as well as myself, occasionally rode to the front (to the end of a street) to see them pass. They marched, at a brisk pace, in ranks well closed up, five or six bands of music being interspersed; and there appeared to be but few women with them. Mr. Hunt, with two or three other men, and, I think, two women* dressed in light blue and white, were in an open carriage, drawn by the people. This carriage was adorned with blue and white flags; and the day was fine and hot. As soon as the great bulk of the procession had passed, we were ordered to stand to our horses. In a very short time afterwards the four troops of the 15th mounted, and at once moved off by the right, at a trot which was increased to a canter. Some one who had been sent from the place of meeting to bring us up led the way, through a number of narrow streets and by a circuitous route, to (what I will call) the south-west corner of St. Peter's Field. We advanced along the south side of this space of ground, without a halt or pause even: the words 'Front!' and 'Forward!' were given, and the trumpet sounded the charge at the very moment the threes wheeled up. When fronted, our line ex-

* Mr. Hay, the magistrate, in his letter to Lord Sidmouth of the 16th August, states that there was but one female, whose name he mentions, who disgraced herself by occupying so unenviable a seat. A second, it is hoped, could not have been found.

tended quite across the ground*, which, in all parts, was so filled with people that their hats seemed to touch.

"It was then, for the first time, that I saw the Manchester troop of yeomanry: they were scattered singly, or in small groups, over the greater part of the field, literally hemmed up, and hedged into the mob, so that they were powerless either to make an impression or to escape: in fact, they were in the power of those whom they were designed to overawe; and it required only a glance to discover their helpless position, and the necessity of our being brought to their rescue. As I was, at the time, informed, this hopeless state of things happened thus:— A platform had been erected near the centre of the field, from which Mr. Hunt and others were to address the multitude; and the magistrates, having ordered a strong body of constables to be in readiness to arrest the speakers, unfortunately imagined that they should support the peace officers by bringing up this troop of yeomanry *at a walk.*† The result of this movement, instead of that which the magistrates desired, was unexpectedly to place this small body of horsemen (so introduced into a dense mob) entirely

* The whole space was only from two to three acres. It has since been entirely built over.

† It was given in evidence by Mr. Hulton, the chairman of the magistrates, at Hunt's subsequent trial at York, that the employment of the yeomanry arose solely from accident; that when Nadin, the chief constable, declared it to be impossible to execute the warrant without military force, both Colonel L'Estrange and the commandant of the yeomanry were written to, directing them to bring up their troops, but that the hussars missed their way, and, consequently, the yeomanry arrived first. He added, that the yeomanry advanced at first four abreast[1], but the shouts of the mob, and the brandishing of their sticks, frightened the horses, which were raw and unused to the work, and that they could only advance very slowly from the pressure of the multitude, which instantly closed behind them, in order to separate them from one another. He also swore that the communication with the hustings by a line of constables was broken by the people closing round the hustings six deep, and linking their arms together.

[1] They attempted to advance by two, but the horses being unsteady, and the people getting between the files, they were immediately separated, and several unhorsed. — *Captain Smyth.*

at the mercy of the people by whom they were, on all sides, pressed upon and surrounded.

"The charge of the hussars, to which I have just alluded, swept this mingled mass of human beings before it: people, yeomen, and constables, in their confused attempts to escape, ran one over the other; so that, by the time we had arrived at the end of the field, the fugitives were literally piled up to a considerable elevation above the level of the ground.* (I may here, by the way, state, that this field, as it is called, was merely an open space of ground, surrounded by buildings, and itself, I rather think, in course of being built upon.) The hussars drove the people forward with the flats of their swords; but sometimes, as is almost inevitably the case when men are placed in such situations, the edge was used, both by the hussars, and, as I have heard, by the yeomen also; but of this latter fact, however, I was not cognisant; and believing, though I do, that nine out of ten of the sabre wounds were caused by the hussars, I must still consider that it redounds highly to the humane forbearance of the men of the 15th that more wounds were not received, when the vast numbers are taken into consideration with whom they were brought into hostile collision; beyond all doubt, however, the far greater amount of injuries arose from the pressure of the routed multitude.† The hussars, on the left, pursued down the various streets which led from the place; those on the right met with something more of resistance. The mob had taken possession of various buildings on that side, particularly of a Quaker's chapel and burial ground enclosed with a wall. This they occupied for some little time; and, in attempting to displace them, some of the men and horses were struck with stones and brick-bats. I was on the left; and as soon as I had passed completely over the ground, and found myself in the street on the other side, I turned back, and then, seeing a sort of fight still going on on the right, I went in that direction. At the very moment I reached the

* "The yeomanry and infantry stationed at the four corners opened to allow the multitude to escape."— *Capt. Smyth.*

† "Quite correct."— *Capt. Smyth.*

Quakers' meeting-house, I saw a farrier of the 15th ride at a small door in the outer wall, and, to my surprise, his horse struck it with such force that it flew open: two or three hussars then rode in, and the place was immediately in their possession. I then turned towards the elevated platform, which still remained in the centre of the field with persons upon it: a few straggling hussars and yeomen, together with a number of men having the appearance of peace officers, were congregating about it. On my way thither I met the commanding officer of my regiment, who directed me to find a trumpeter, in order that he might sound the 'rally' or 'retreat.' This sent me again down the street I had first been in (after the pursuing men of my troop); but I had not ridden above a hundred yards before I found a trumpeter, and returned with him to the Colonel. The field and the adjacent streets now presented an extraordinary sight: the ground was quite covered with hats, shoes, sticks, musical instruments*, and other things. Here and there lay the unfortunates who were too much injured to move away; and this sight was rendered the more distressing by observing some women among the sufferers.

"Standing near the corner of the street where I had been sent in search of a trumpeter, a brother officer called my attention to a pistol being fired from a window.† I saw it fired twice; and I believe it had been fired once before I observed it.

"Some of the 31st regiment, just now arriving on the

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* "Add clubs, brick-bats, and large stones."— *Capt. Smyth.*

† "Captain Smyth's troop of yeomanry was stationed at the corner next to a cluster of unfinished houses, on the roof of which two or three men had placed themselves with a gun. The fellow who held it used to retire behind the chimney to load, and then came forward to fire. Capt. Smyth's attention was directed to him by the farrier of his troop, who said, 'That fellow is *boking* his gun at either you or me. I have seen him fire at us more than once.' The man was soon perceived from the opposite side of the square by some of the 88th, who fired a shot or two over the roof and cleared the spot."— *Capt. Smyth.*

ground, were ordered to take possession of this house; but I do not know if it was carried into effect.

"I next went towards a private of the regiment, whose horse had fallen over a piece of timber nearly in the middle of the square, and who was most seriously injured. There were many of these pieces of timber (or timber trees) lying upon the ground; and, as these could not be distinguished when the mob covered them, they had caused bad falls to one officer's horse and to many of the troopers'.

"While I was attending to the removal of the wounded soldier, the artillery troop, with the troop of hussars attached to it, arrived on the ground from the same direction by which we had entered the field: these were quickly followed by the Cheshire yeomanry. The 31st regiment came in another direction; and the whole remained formed up until our squadrons had fallen in again.

"Carriages were brought to convey the wounded to the Manchester Infirmary; and the troop of hussars, which came up with the guns, was marched off to escort to the gaol a number of persons who had been arrested, and among these Mr. Hunt. For some time the town was patrolled by the troops, the streets being nearly empty, and the shops, for the most part, closed. We then returned to the barracks. I should not omit to mention, that, before the men were dismissed, the arms were minutely examined; and that no carbine or pistol was found to have been fired, and only one pistol to have been loaded. About eight o'clock, P.M., one squadron of the 15th Hussars (two troops) was ordered on duty to form part of a strong night picket, the other part of which consisted of two companies of the 88th regiment. This picket was stationed at a place called the New Cross, at the end of Oldham Street. As soon as it had taken up its position a mob assembled about it, which increased as the darkness came on: stones were thrown at the soldiers: the hussars many times cleared the ground by driving the mob up the streets leading from the New Cross. But these attempts to get rid of the annoyance were only successful for the moment; for the people got through the houses or narrow passages from one street into another, and the troops

were again attacked, and many men and horses struck with stones. This lasted nearly an hour and a half; and the soldiers being more and more pressed upon, a town magistrate, who was with the picket, read the Riot Act, and the officer in command ordered the 88th to fire (which they did by platoon firing) down three of the streets. The firing lasted only a few minutes: perhaps not more than thirty shots were fired; but these had a magical effect: the mob ran away, and dispersed forthwith, leaving three or four persons on the ground with gun-shot wounds.

"At four o'clock in the morning the picket squadron was relieved by another squadron of the regiment. With this latter squadron I was on duty; and after we had patrolled the town for two hours, the officer in command sent me to the magistrates (who had remained assembled during the night) to report to them that the town was perfectly quiet, and to request their sanction to the return of the military to their quarters.

"On the afternoon of the 17th I visited, in company with some military medical officers, the infirmary. I saw there from twelve to twenty cases of sabre wounds; several persons that were severely crushed, and, among these, two women, who appeared not likely to recover. One man was in a dying state from a gun-shot wound in the head; another had had his leg amputated: both these casualties arose from the fire of the 88th the night before. Two or three were reputed dead; one of them, a constable, killed in St. Peter's Field*; but I saw none of the bodies.

* "This man, by name Ashworth, was accidentally rode over in the charge of the 15th Hussars. One of the Manchester yeomen, Mr. Holmes, was struck off his horse by a brick-bat, and had his skull fractured either by the blow or the fall." Capt. Smyth adds, "that the Cheshire yeomanry paraded the town through the night of the 16th and 17th, and the next night lay at their horses' heads in St. Peter's Field." He has not the slightest doubt that the intention was to sack the town. The men all went from his brother's (Professor Smyth's) colliery, near Macclesfield, and the other collieries were deserted for the same object. When his corps was dismissed on the 16th, they were distributed amongst

"As shortly as I could, I have now related what fell under my own observation during these twenty-four hours. * * * I trust that I have, at least in some degree, complied with your wishes; and I beg you will believe me, my dear Sir, yours most truly,

"WILL^M. J. HYLTON JOLLIFFE.

"To Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt,
Esq., M. P."

Lord Sidmouth's first observations to his eldest daughter, on receiving the intelligence on the 18th, indicate no suspicion on his part that undue violence had been exercised, or any erroneous measures pursued. "The proceedings," he said, "at Manchester on Monday were not of an ordinary character, but they will, I trust, prove a salutary lesson to modern reformers. Hunt and his associates are in custody, and their flags, &c. have been seized or destroyed by the special constables and soldiery, all of whom behaved with the greatest spirit and temper; but forbearance became impossible."

Thus, then, the means which his Lordship had placed at the disposal of the magistrates for the preservation of the peace had proved fully adequate to the purpose; and it was impossible, therefore, up to this time, for the severest judge to attach to his conduct any imputation of blame. Such, however, was the anxiety which the magistrates now manifested, on contemplating the results of their own resolute measures, that Lord Sidmouth (after consulting those colleagues who were within reach, and obtaining the permission of the Prince Regent) at once resolved

the public-houses; but being called out again on a fresh alarm, it was found that the mob had secretly locked up several of the men and horses in the different billets, and it was necessary to send round a sergeant's party from house to house to liberate them.

to take on himself a full share of the responsibility, by addressing letters to the Earls of Derby and Stamford on the 21st of August, conveying the thanks of the Prince Regent to the magistrates and yeomanry of Lancashire and Cheshire, for their conduct on the occasion. His Royal Highness's sanction to this important step was communicated in the following letter:—

"Royal George Yacht, off Christchurch, Aug. 19th, 1819.

"My Lord,

"The Prince Regent commands me to convey to your Lordship his approbation and high commendation of the conduct of the magistrates and civil authorities at Manchester, as well as of the officers and troops, both regular and yeomanry cavalry, whose firmness and effectual support of the civil power preserved the peace of the town upon that most critical occasion. His Royal Highness entertains a favourable sense of the forbearance of Lieut.-Col. L'Estrange in the execution of his duty; and bestows the greatest praise upon the zeal and alacrity manifested by Major Trafford and Lieut.-Col. Townshend and their respective corps. I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

"B. BLOOMFIELD.

"To the Lord Viscount Sidmouth."

Lord Sidmouth was aware that this proceeding would subject him to the charge of precipitation; but he was acting upon what he considered an essential principle of government, namely, to acquire the confidence of the magistracy, especially in critical times, by showing a readiness to support them in all honest, reasonable, and well intended acts, without inquiring too minutely whether they might have performed their duty a little better or a little worse.* So impressed was his Lordship with the im-

* This sentiment was well expressed by the venerable Earl of

portance of this principle, that he constantly declared in after-life, that had the question recurred, he should again have pursued a course, the policy of which was not less obvious than its justice. If, indeed, the government had left those magistrates exposed to the storm of popular indignation, until the verdict against Hunt and his associates in the succeeding year had demonstrated the legality of their conduct, the magistracy at large must, from the dread of abandonment, have failed in duty towards that royal authority, which either could not or would not stand by them in the hour of peril; and thus, in all probability, the most calamitous consequences would have ensued. His Lordship's opinion on this subject was not, like many favourite systems, founded only on theory; for his argument, when discussing these events many years later, comprised two substantial facts, one proving the advantage of governments enjoying the confidence of the subordinate authorities; the other showing, from a subsequent example under nearly parallel circumstances (the only distinction being in the stage to which the offenders had proceeded), the evils resulting from the absence of promptitude in the suppression of outrage. The first related to Lord Nel-

Sheffield in a letter to Lord Sidmouth on the first of November: —

"To attack," he observed, "the executive for supporting the magistracy on such an occasion appears to me perfectly senseless. How can it be supposed that any magistrates will act unless assured of support? nay, unless supported with a high hand? As surely as the executive shrinks from encouraging, approving, and supporting the magistracy, there will be an end of all subordination."

son, who, on telling Lord Sidmouth, after the battle of Copenhagen, the anecdote respecting his disregard of the signal of recall, added, "But I did not mind, for *I knew you would stand by me if I acted for the best:*" the second was founded on a comparison between the different modes adopted for the dispersion of the riotous asemblages at Manchester in 1819, and at Bristol in 1831. In the former instance, a prompt and vigorous system was pursued, and the town was saved and restored to tranquillity in a few hours, at an expense of (according to Mr. Hay) only six lives, a few criminals consigned to imprisonment, and the loss of a day's industry: but in the case of Bristol, the deadly torpor of non-interference, arising from an apprehension on the part of the military commander that he would not receive the support of the government if he acted in a vigorous manner, consigned the doomed city for three days to the merciless fury of the mob, from which it was only at length rescued at the tremendous cost of the Episcopal Palace, both the prisons, the Mansion House, Excise Office, Custom House, and numerous private dwellings of the respectable inhabitants sacked and destroyed, many lives* either sacrificed by the soldiery, or destroyed in the conflagration of the city; and, to close the melancholy catalogue, twenty-one miserable criminals, of whom four were executed, con-

* The published return accounts for only twelve killed and ninety-four wounded, but no doubt was entertained that a much larger number lost their lives, especially drunken persons, in the well-stocked cellars of the houses that were burnt. Indeed the remains of several were afterwards found. The property destroyed was estimated at nearly half a million.

demned to death by the outraged laws of their country. This was the difference, in effect, between a decisive and a hesitating system of policy.

Such is a brief outline of the argument by which his Lordship justified a step of which he never afterwards doubted the propriety, namely, his assuming a part of the responsibility of the proceedings at Manchester. And this after-thought, let it be remembered, was the only part of the whole transaction for which he was personally answerable. For of the calamitous events of the 16th of August *he could know nothing until after their occurrence.* They were quite as likely to have happened at any other meeting as at that. His instructions and preparations were, on all occasions of that nature, precisely alike.

It was not long before Lord Sidmouth's whole conduct in these proceedings received the deliberate approbation both of parliament and of a jury; but during the interim he was subjected to the grossest calumnies and misrepresentations. Indifferent, however, to such treatment, he was now occupied in investigating the evidence against Hunt and his associates, which he informed the Regent, on the 25th of August, "did not afford sufficient ground for proceeding against them for high treason; but that it fully warranted a prosecution for a treasonable conspiracy, which would be instituted immediately in order that the bill of indictment might be presented to the grand jury at the ensuing summer assizes for the county of Lancaster."* The tactics of the dis-

* This was done accordingly, and the grand jury of the county palatine assembled at Manchester found true bills against Hunt

affected were now changed; and since, after the vigour shown by the government at Manchester, they despaired of effecting their objects through intimidation, they now relinquished for the moment their former grievances, and endeavoured to unite all the opponents of government in condemning the dispersion of the meeting at that place. The dread which the peaceable and well disposed classes entertained of the violent reformers had greatly subsided, when they saw the revolutionary phalanx so easily put to flight by the troopers at Manchester; the connecting link, therefore, of apprehended danger being removed, the usual political influences began again to prevail, and the question at issue, though in reality unchanged, was by many no longer regarded as a grand contest between law and anarchy for the existence of the monarchy, but simply as a struggle between Tories and Whigs for the possession of power. Lord Grenville, indeed, and some others, gave an honourable support to the administration; but the majority of that party, regarding this as a legitimate subject of opposition, and naturally jealous of any appearance of interference with the freedom of discussion, pursued their usual policy, and did not hesitate to express unqualified disapprobation of the recent unexpected exercise of authority.

One of the modes by which they manifested their displeasure on the occasion, was the assemblage of county meetings for the purpose of petitioning the Prince Regent to institute an inquiry into the proceedings at Manchester. A course which, though perfectly con-

and nine others for a conspiracy. The accused parties, however, all traversed to the next assizes.

stitutional under ordinary circumstances, was regarded by government as fraught with much danger to the country at that particular conjuncture. For it was calculated not only to intimidate the magistracy at large, and indispose them to act with energy under the critical and difficult circumstances likely to arise, but also to encourage the disaffected in their mischievous career, by representing them as injured parties, instead of under their real character of lawless aggressors; and it tended, moreover, to increase their moral weight, by exhibiting them to the public as co-operating with a powerful party, whose respect or confidence, they did not, in reality, either deserve or possess.*

This series of movements, on the part of respectable persons, as distinguished from those who originated the mischief, was commenced on the 9th of September by the Common Council of London, to whom Mr. Waithman presented a series of seven resolutions, and a petition to the Prince Regent founded upon them, of which, as the principal features were afterwards adopted by the Yorkshire, Norfolk, and other meetings, some notice must here be taken. After declaring that "under the free forms of the British con-

* This sentiment was well explained by the Marquis of Buckingham in the following letter, which he addressed to the Bishop of Hereford on the 10th of October:—

"I assure your Lordship that I am highly gratified by the manner in which you have expressed your approbation of the line I have taken respecting the county meeting. I regret deeply to see loyal men like ——— and his friends made the dupes of Hunt, Wooller, and Co., whose object is civil war, and who would naturally prefer obtaining that object through the indirect means of enlisting the Whigs in their cause, who possess weight, influence, and respectability, which the reformers have not."

stitution it was the undoubted right of Englishmen to assemble together for the purpose of deliberating upon public grievances," this document asserts positively, that "the meeting held at Manchester on the 16th of August was legally assembled; that its proceedings were conducted in an orderly and peaceable manner, and that the people composing it were therefore entitled to protection; that nevertheless, although no act of riot or tumult had taken place, the magistrates issued their warrant for the apprehension of certain persons then present; to execute which, although no resistance whatever was made, resort was immediately had to the military, when the Manchester yeomanry *rushed forward, and furiously attacked the peaceable citizens*, by which great numbers of them were wantonly rode over, and *many inhumanly* sabred and killed. Into the outrages therefore thus committed, the petitioners prayed the Prince Regent to institute an immediate inquiry, in order *that the guilty perpetrators might be brought to signal and condign punishment.*"

Comparing these bold assertions with the real facts; that the meeting was afterwards clearly proved tumultuous and illegal to the satisfaction both of parliament and courts of justice; that, instead of "furiously rushing forward" as stated, the yeomanry advanced at a foot-pace; that but six fatal casualties (including the case of the constable) occurred, two of which resulted from the nocturnal riot at New Cross; and that this "peaceable and orderly assemblage" took with it to the meeting banners, badges, bands of music, mottos, clubs, stones, bricks, and *fire-arms*; the present reader of this document cannot but regard it as an amusing specimen of the

exaggeration of former days. Presumptuous, however, and unfounded as this address and petition undoubtedly were, their presentation to the Regent afforded to Lord Sidmouth an opportunity, of which he gladly availed himself, of introducing into his Royal Highness's answer from the throne what "he intended as a reproof to the Common Council, and as a caution to the public."

"I receive," the Regent observed, "with feelings of deep regret, this address and petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, in common council assembled.

"At a time when ill-designing and turbulent men are actively engaged in inflaming the minds of their fellow-subjects, and endeavouring, by means the most daring and insidious, to alienate them from their allegiance to his Majesty and the established constitution of the realm, it is on the vigilance and conduct of the magistrates that the preservation of the public tranquillity must in a great degree depend; and a firm, faithful, and active discharge of their duty cannot but give them the strongest claim to the support and approbation of their sovereign and their country. With the circumstances which preceded the late meeting at Manchester, you must be unacquainted; and of those which attended it you appear to have been incorrectly informed. If, however, the laws were really violated on that occasion by those to whom it immediately belonged to assist in the execution of them, the tribunals of this country are open to afford redress; but to institute an extra-judicial inquiry under such circumstances as the present would be manifestly inconsistent with the clearest principles of public justice."

Yorkshire was the first county which engaged in this party movement. It is stated in the correspondence, that the requisition to the high sheriff to call a meeting for the purposes above described was got up at the Doncaster races, by the party which came from Wentworth House. Be that as it may, the

meeting which occurred on the 14th of October, without producing any circumstances particularly deserving of record, beyond the fact that it passed resolutions demanding an inquiry into the occurrences at Manchester, occasioned much painful embarrassment to ministers, on account of the prominent part taken in it by Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of the county. This is strongly indicated in a note which Lord Sidmouth addressed to the Earl of Liverpool on the 30th of September. "The proceedings in Yorkshire have entirely given a new character to the Manchester question, and they, as certainly, constitute a new and important feature in the present critical state of the country." "As far as the Manchester business goes," Lord Liverpool replied, "it will identify even the respectable part of the Opposition with Hunt and the radical reformers."

Earl Fitzwilliam had in his high office rendered important services to the government on several occasions, from the Luddite disturbances in 1812 to a very recent period. Lord Sidmouth had also enjoyed his Lordship's acquaintance ever since the days of their common friend Mr. Burke. Nothing therefore could have been more distressing to Lord Sidmouth than to be the instrument of directing the royal disapprobation against one he so much respected. There appeared, however, to be no alternative; for had the ministers overlooked the indecorum of the representative of the sovereign requiring from that sovereign an inquiry into the conduct of his own government, it would have been considered an indication of weakness and timidity, under which they could no longer have retained office with honour to themselves, or advantage to their king and country.

It must have been a painful duty, however, for Lord Sidmouth, as he informed Lord Bathurst on the 19th of October, to write to Lord Liverpool "to call his attention to the conduct of Lord Fitzwilliam — who, in the county under his immediate charge, and in which he represented his Majesty, had thought proper to take the leading part in calling a public meeting for a purpose the most disrespectful to the Prince Regent, and in utter disregard of his Royal Highness's admonition from the throne upon receiving the address of the city of London. Upon these grounds," he added, "I *then* thought that he ought to be removed from the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding. That opinion is strengthened by his conduct *at* the county meeting. Lord L. concurs in this opinion, and so I have reason to think does Lord C. It was thought right, however, to call a cabinet, and it will meet here at two to-morrow." *

The Prince Regent having acquiesced in the "recommendation of his confidential servants, that Earl Fitzwilliam should be informed that his Royal Highness had no further occasion for his Lordship's services as Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of York," it became Lord Sidmouth's duty, on the 21st of October, to make a communication to that effect to the noble Earl, who briefly replied, that he "deferred with due submission to his Royal Highness's pleasure." On the following day, Lord Sidmouth offered the honour to the Earl of Harewood; and on his declining, in consequence of his advanced age, it

* There are three letters from Lord Sidmouth to the Lord Chancellor given in the life of the latter, vol. ii. p. 345. *et seq.*, which relate to this same subject.

was conferred on his Lordship's eldest son, Lord Lascelles.

As this indication of the firmness and spirit of the government increased for a moment the unpopularity of the home department, in justice to Lord Sidmouth a few passages will here be extracted from various letters of approval which he received on that occasion. The first which will be given proceeded from the pen of Henry Bankes, Esq., M. P. for Dorsetshire, a gentleman whose testimony was especially valuable on such a question, as, in common with Mr. Wilberforce, he always professed to keep himself free from party trammels. The letter was addressed to Lord Sidmouth; and after expressing Mr. Bankes's intention to attend the opening of the session, it proceeded as follows: — "I have often rejoiced that my lot was cast at a distance from manufactures, and populous towns, and amongst an orderly and quiet race of people; and I am sure that there never was more reason to estimate the value of that comfort than at present. You had no measures to keep with the Opposition, who certainly have kept none with you and your friends; you have therefore done right to set them at defiance by removing Lord Fitzwilliam. Those who hold situations of trust and dignity under the Crown, should not betray the Crown to the prejudices or turbulence of the people."

This letter Lord Sidmouth, on the 27th of October, forwarded to Lord Liverpool, who replied, that it "was very satisfactory. In return," he added, "you will be glad to hear that I have had a letter from the Bishop of Lincoln this morning, in which he says, 'I have just had some conversation with Mr. Wilberforce, who expressed himself much pleased with

the removal of Lord Fitzwilliam from the Lord Lieutenancy of Yorkshire, and indeed in general with the measures of government.' "

To conclude this part of the subject, on the 24th of October his Lordship received a most gracious autograph letter from the Prince Regent, in which his Royal Highness was pleased to observe that "Lord Fitzwilliam had drawn upon himself his own dismissal, by lending himself to such proceedings; that the language of Brighton was strongly in praise of the measure; and that every effect produced by it, as far as his Royal Highness could learn, was most satisfactory."

Lord Sidmouth had previously received similar encouragement from another illustrious member of the royal family, the Duke of Clarence, who, on writing to his Lordship from Dover, on the 13th of October, expressed himself in the following words: —

"I rejoice to hear that parliament is to assemble in November, when I trust the legislature will put an effectual stop to these mischievous and tumultuous meetings. I visited the disaffected and disturbed districts in 1806, and even then saw with astonishment and grief that the evil spirit was already at work. * * * As a common observer, I must make one remark: the plan is too well organised not to have leaders and money, and I trust government will be able to trace out these two resources. I went abroad, I thought, a perfect John Bull; but my residence on the Continent has made me more than ever prefer my own country to all others, and I am therefore more particularly anxious to see our constitution and advantages over the rest of the world preserved. We have, I trust, a good Lord Mayor, and the Marquis of Buckingham has acted with great judgment and propriety. Adieu, and ever believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours sincerely, WILLIAM."

CHAPTER XXXV.

1819.

The Violence of County Meetings checked by the Vigour of the Government. Lord Sidmouth recommends counter Declarations. His Correspondence with Edmond Wodehouse, Esq., M.P., Lord Darlington, and others. Government blamed by its Friends for Supineness. Lord Sidmouth justifies the Government in a Letter to Lord Lascelles. He discloses his Plan for remedying the existing Evils to Lord Liverpool, and recommends the early Meeting of Parliament, to which his Lordship at last assents. The Prince Regent calls on Lord Sidmouth to devise remedial Measures. Lord Sidmouth engages in the Task with the Assistance of Lord Eldon. Letters from Lord Eldon to Lord Sidmouth. His Opinion that the Meeting at Manchester was a rebellious Riot. Proofs of the Necessity of an Augmentation of the Army. Serious Riots at Paisley. Rapid Transfer of Troops to Scotland. Spirited and Patriotic Conduct of the Prince Regent. Able-bodied Pensioners called out for Garrison Duty. Disposition of the Troops. Duke of Wellington's Instructions to Sir J. Byng on the Subject. Lord Sidmouth receives a Letter from his Grace. He writes to Sir J. Byng, Mr. Bathurst, and Mr. Yorke. Meeting of Parliament. Lord Grey's Amendment calling for Inquiry into the Proceedings of the 16th of August. Lord Sidmouth's Reply. Large Majorities in favour of Government. Select Papers presented by Government to the House. Analysis of the Four Acts introduced by Lord Sidmouth, and of Two Acts introduced by Lords Eldon and Castlereagh. Conviction of Mr. Hunt and his Associates.

THE energy recently displayed having left the determination of the ministry to uphold the laws and make

the Regent's government respected no longer doubtful, the beneficial effects of such timely vigour quickly became apparent in the subdued tone of the public meetings, and in the reviving confidence of the loyal and well-affected. In some instances the supporters of government boldly met, and foiled the allied forces of Whigs and Radical Reformers on their own chosen arena of county meetings. In two, indeed, — those of Cornwall and Hampshire — they actually sought the contest, and won it. Too much, however, was risked in such experiments to render a frequent appeal to them advisable, and consequently Lord Sidmouth recommended a different course in the annexed reply to J. T. Batt, Esq., who, on the 11th of October, had consulted him upon the expediency of convening a public meeting of the supporters of government in the county of Wilts: — "For the friends of the constitution to call a county meeting, unless they had a well-grounded confidence in a favourable result, would, I think, be improvident; and how can such a confidence be entertained at the present moment, when the struggle is between those who have property and those who have none? of which latter description there would be an immense influx, it being next to impossible to exclude from a county meeting inhabitants not being freeholders.* It ap-

* Lord Lascelles, in the account he sent to Lord Sidmouth of the Yorkshire meeting on the 14th of October, stated that "of the 10,000 or 12,000 persons who, according to the best calculation that could be made, attended the meeting, probably about 1000 or 1500 might be freeholders. The meeting, therefore, was entirely at the command of the radical leaders, three of whom were placed in conspicuous parts of the hustings to give the signals for applause or otherwise."

pears to me, therefore, to be advisable for the loyal to abstain from calling public meetings; but that some of the most respectable persons in the several cities and towns throughout the kingdom should meet and agree upon such a declaration as the crisis calls for, and, after having publicly announced it, leave copies of it at different houses of resort for signature. I doubt, however, whether even it is wise to take this course in counties, unless the enemy should start first."

The plan here suggested, of counteracting the effect of a public meeting by a declaration of opinion privately signed by individuals, was successfully adopted in Yorkshire and other counties, as well as in the city of London; and although it necessarily presented much facility of attack to those who found their schemes disappointed by it, it produced a very beneficial effect throughout the kingdom. At that period of excitement, indeed, it must have conveyed a much clearer notion of the real sentiments of the reflecting portion of the community, than the prearranged resolutions of county meetings; where calm discussion was impracticable, and where the majority, swayed by passion, not by reason, was blindly led by "itinerant orators from Manchester, Leeds, and other places, who," as Sir Alexander Boswell reported on the 24th of October, had travelled as far even as Scotland, "fomenting the spirit of evil."

A second occasion on which Lord Sidmouth expressed his sentiments on this subject was when writing, on the 3d of October, to Edmond Wodehouse, Esq., M. P. for Norfolk, who had obligingly

informed his Lordship of an intention on the part of their opponents to call a meeting in that county: —

"The Prince Regent's answer," he observed, "to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London was intended as a reproof to them, and as a caution to the public; a considerable portion of which has been more inflamed and misled by unfounded assumptions and false statements than upon any other occasion within my recollection. It will be a satisfaction to you to know, that, of the illegality of the meeting of the 16th of August, no doubt whatever is entertained by the Lord Chancellor and by the other law advisers of the crown, nor of the justifiable conduct of the magistrates and yeomanry. Let those who think otherwise appeal to the proper tribunals, before which also those persons, if any there are, should be brought who may be charged with instances of individual and unwarrantable violence, for which neither magistrates nor military officers can be answerable. If there be a complaint against ministers, let the charge be made in parliament, where it can be fully entered into and where they can be heard, and if they fail to justify their conduct, let the sentence be pronounced against them which they will then be proved to have deserved. But the sole purpose of all these public meetings is to create such a prejudice in the minds of the people as may operate upon the proceedings of courts of law, and even upon the deliberations of parliament. The injustice of those who promote them appears, therefore, to me to be flagrant, and I am sure it is unexampled. If there is any description of men to whom, from justice, gratitude, and policy, protection and support are particularly due, it is the magistracy of this country; and, surely, these considerations apply in no ordinary degree to the yeomanry also. But the object is to decry both; and, if that object be attained, there will be no alternative but anarchy or a military government. But I have said more, much more than I intended. I will only add, that if there are any particular points upon which you would wish to be fully and accurately informed, you will oblige me by mentioning them, and I will answer your enquiries to the best of my power. I am, &c.,

"SIDMOUTH."

Attention must now revert to the general correspondence, the course of which, from an anxiety to trace the subject of county meetings and addresses to a conclusion, has been somewhat anticipated. In reviewing the sentiments of the numerous correspondents who alluded to the proceedings at Manchester, it is remarkable that, with the solitary exception of the Earl of Darlington, who considered the employment of the military "a very precipitate measure," they all admitted the legality and propriety of the magistrates' interference. One writer remarked that "his Lordship's early demonstration of power was an act of mercy for which he was entitled to the country's gratitude;" adding that, "had the department been so administered in 1780, very many horrors might have been averted." Lord Redesdale, writing on the 19th of August, went so far as to say that "every meeting for radical reform was not merely a seditious attempt to undermine the existing constitution of government, by bringing it into hatred and contempt, but it was an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against that constitution of government, including the king as its head, and bound by his coronation oath to maintain it." His Lordship admitted, however, that "something more explicit" was now required, and he suggested, therefore, that a declaratory law, which he doubted not that parliament would pass, should be proposed, to remove all doubt of the treasonable criminality of such assemblies." Lord Sheffield also, writing on the 2d of October, "entirely coincided with many very considerable persons with whom he corresponded, as to the necessity of some new laws being enacted to check the

licentiousness of the press, and the progress of wild and extravagant doctrines. * * * During the many years I have lived," he proceeded, "the temper of the times never appeared more alarming, or to require more precaution and energy than at present. 'Wilkes and liberty' was a respectable thing compared to it; yet that cry disgusted me so much at the time that I relinquished the youthful ardour vulgarly called patriotism; and it firmly established in my mind the principle that it is not only the duty but the interest of every independent man to support the government of the country whenever he consistently can." "Nothing," his Lordship observed in another letter, "annoys me more than the quibbling remarks on the conduct of the magistracy and yeomanry. If itinerant orators of the lowest character are to assemble the population, and place them in military array, under the pretence of amending the constitution, and they are to be allowed to remain together until the civil power is overwhelmed, there must be an end of all government."

It is a singular fact that whilst the disaffected were upbraiding Lord Sidmouth and the executive authorities over whom he presided for their severity, many of the letters complain of their lenity and supineness. The truth is, that government was not armed with sufficient powers to restrain the spirit of disaffection then prevailing in the land; nor did it possess, during the recess of parliament, adequate means of encouraging the good, and restraining the evil doers, by the promulgation of its wishes, opinions, and intentions. It was blamed, therefore, for not exercising an authority which it did not possess, and

for permitting evils which it had no power to prevent. On reflecting upon this posture of affairs, Lord Sidmouth satisfied himself that to ensure a permanent and effectual remedy three things should be done: parliament should be assembled as soon as possible; the law should be armed with new powers; and the military force should be increased. The first of these measures he proposed very early in September to Lord Liverpool, who showed considerable reluctance to comply with it; so much so, indeed, that in corresponding with his Lordship on the subject, Lord Sidmouth, as he told the Chancellor, "felt it incumbent upon him to express his sentiments in a manner which he wished he could have thought himself justified in avoiding." Lord Sidmouth freely delivered his opinions on this point in the following justification of his conduct to Lord Lascelles, who, in the letter in which he reported the proceedings of the meeting at York, had candidly stated that "government was much blamed for supineness under present circumstances, and that no zeal could be raised in support of the administration": —

"Whitehall, Oct. 15th, 1819.

* * *

"In the substance of your Lordship's opinions on the present critical state of the country I entirely concur. Though I may speak with an unbecoming confidence, I venture to assert that there has been no want of vigilance and exertion on the part of the government. But the laws are insufficient, and the military force of the country too weak for the description and extent of the danger with which we have to contend. On these accounts, as well as on others, I rejoice that parliament is soon to be assembled; and I must acknowledge to your Lordship my regret that it was not assembled sooner. When parliament is decried and derided, it is of the first im-

portance to uphold its authority; and that cannot be done without resorting to its power. I hope, and I sincerely think, that I am as unwilling as any one to call for or to wish for an exercise of its power beyond the limits of an actual necessity; but we must legislate *up* to that necessity, if the country is to be effectually protected. * * * The progress of disaffection can only be checked by vigilance, promptitude, and vigour; by an activity and determination, on the part of the friends of the constitution, equal to, and surpassing, what is manifested by its enemies. Of these dispositions there are, I am happy to say, strong and increasing indications. Believe me, &c. &c.

"SIDMOUTH."

This subject is also alluded to in the following letter, which his Lordship addressed to Mr. Bathurst on the 14th of September: — "I send you an important document, which I received on Saturday last from Lord Stanley.* My own opinion has long been that the meeting of parliament ought not to be delayed beyond the month of November; and this communication has strengthened it. For near a fortnight I did not see one of my colleagues. To-morrow there will be a cabinet at this office. It will be attended

* This was a statement from the grand jury of the county palatine of Lancaster, assembled at the summer assizes, representing the "unhappily disturbed condition in which they found a large district of the county to be placed," and signed by his Lordship, as their foreman. It was declared in this document "that the system of intimidation was such that individuals were deterred from declaring their sentiments, or giving information against offenders;" that the object of the disaffected "was no other than to reverse the order of society, and to wrest the landed property from their possessors by force; that the magistrates, few in numbers, and harassed by continued attention to their duties, were unable to maintain the public peace, and that in one district neither warrants could be executed nor legal process enforced."

by the Duke of Wellington, Lord Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh, and myself." The cabinet on that occasion came to no decision, but agreed to meet again on the following Tuesday, when, as Lord Sidmouth informed the Chancellor, who was in Dorsetshire, "the point to be considered would be, whether or no parliament should be assembled before Christmas, concerning which there would be, he thought, much difference of opinion. He was himself convinced that there was no time to be lost."

The cabinet, on the 21st, decided unfavourably to Lord Sidmouth's views respecting the early meeting of parliament; but new circumstances subsequently arose, especially the requisitions in Yorkshire and elsewhere, which shook Lord Liverpool's opinion, and induced him to observe to Lord Sidmouth, on the 1st of October, that "he thought it may be right for him to call the cabinet together again, particularly with the feelings he appeared still to entertain respecting a meeting of parliament in November."

Lord Sidmouth instantly availed himself of this permission, by convening the cabinet for the 8th of October, as he informed Mr. Bathurst on the 4th, in the terms annexed: — "The cabinet is summoned for Friday, at Lord Liverpool's request, as he thinks that the question of meeting before Christmas is much changed since it was last discussed; but his bias is still to the negative. My opinion is unaltered; but I lament the delay, as I think it has given great advantages to our opponents. These, however, are considerably counteracted by the more prominent conduct of the loyal, and especially by the improved

prospect in the city, 'where the proceedings are becoming very satisfactory and encouraging.'

"The deputation of magistrates from Lancashire and Cheshire have been four days in town. Their report is very unpleasant. At Manchester, and in its neighbourhood, nearly all the lower orders are corrupted, and all the middling and higher intimidated." The result of the cabinet meeting was an order for the assemblage of parliament on the 23d of November, a decision which induced Lord Eldon to remark, "Better late than later."

It now, therefore, became Lord Sidmouth's duty anxiously to consider and prepare those new measures, the necessity for which had induced him to urge the government to call parliament together at so unusual a period. Of these, one of the most important was the regulation of the press, which, as he observed to Mr. Caldecot, was "at present a most malignant and formidable enemy to the constitution, to which it owed its freedom." To this object he was urged, as well by his own deep sense of its importance as by the gracious commands of the Prince Regent, conveyed to him by Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, on the 11th of September, in the following terms: — "His Royal Highness has read your Lordship's letter, covering the enclosure from Lord Stanley, the contents of which have deeply impressed him. The Prince Regent, however, is without apprehension for the result, provided your Lordship, in conjunction with the law officers and the government, devise some system calculated to repress the publications circulated throughout all the manufacturing districts,

and to which his Royal Highness ascribes much of the present unpleasant state of the country."

Thus urged and thus sanctioned, Lord Sidmouth sought the co-operation of the Chancellor, who was at this time enjoying his vacation at Encombe. When, therefore, Lord Eldon, in his correspondence with Lord Sidmouth respecting the legal steps consequent on the recent proceedings at Manchester, threw out a hint that he "might give him further trouble on these questions," the latter replied, in terms of brief but ready acquiescence, "Proceed, and give me all the advice and assistance you can." The first letter, in answer to this invitation, is dated September 16th; and after indulging in an indignant philippic on the licentiousness of the press, and on what was doing with respect to the Manchester business, goes on in the following manner:—"It is impossible, I think, to look at all these things without being convinced that some alteration must be made in the law which gives the traverse to a distant period in those cases in which the public safety requires that there should be more immediate trial. The trials for conspiracy for misdemeanour, I am afraid will, by the means above mentioned, be rendered wholly ineffacious, a fact which would have attended, though for other reasons, prosecutions for a higher offence; but such prosecutions would, in the interim, have kept the public mind in a state much better suited to the real nature of what has passed. I agree, however—though I think the case would have supported, in law, the prosecutions for higher offences—that the attention due to the opinions of those who must conduct the government prosecutions left no option be-

tween prosecution for misdemeanour and prosecution for the higher offence.

"I continue to think it essential that some law should pass to prevent the drilling, either secretly or publicly, except under the King's authority. * * * Something must be done — although it will require great consideration to determine precisely what — to repress these public meetings in *open places*.

I ponder upon this in my walks and rides. Great care must be taken not to break in upon habits founded on constitutional English liberty further than is necessary to secure the direct object of the law of England — the happiness, safety, and liberty of the public. So far as it is necessary for that purpose, the necessity must be met and provided for effectually. There is another point of much moment — to consider what may be right as to union societies, and societies acting by delegates in political matters. There is a further point — the dissemination of political poison in cheap publications. They have driven out of the world all the cheap tracts inculcating the doctrines of morality and religion." Having thus fully opened his case, his Lordship concluded his letter by promising a repetition of "trouble," which promise, four days afterwards, September 20th, he proceeded thus to fulfil.

After "expressing his satisfaction upon reading the Prince's answer to the city," and strongly declaring his opinion in favour of an early meeting of parliament, his Lordship observes as follows: — "I cannot convince myself that the meeting was not an overt act of treason, and that Hunt's presence, in the circumstances, would not have been sufficient, in law, to

affect him. If that course had been taken, we ought to have heard little of the scandalous resolutions in the city and other places. But it was impossible to take that course. The dispersing the meeting with force, and so early, can only be justified in considering it as a riot actually commenced, and a rebellious riot; for I see *such* riots in the books.

"I believe I shall be very well able, before parliament meets, to prove that it was such, and that it was, in law, justifiable to disperse it forcibly*: whether, if force was justifiable, force was used beyond what was reasonable, and therefore not justifiably and in excess, may be another question. I believe our old authors will bear me out in the notions I form as to meetings such in their nature and circumstances as that held at Manchester: take all their flags, and all the inscriptions upon them; if those inscriptions were in language used by the individuals present; if 'Liberty and death!' was resounded from one part of the multitude, 'Reform or revolution!' from another, might it not well be reasoned that this was a rebellious riot? and can it make a difference, a substantial difference, that the multitude assemble *under banners speaking for them all, and uttering for them all sedition and treason?* Is not the inscription on each banner to be deemed the language of every individual arrayed under it?

* Extract from Townshend's Lives of Twelve eminent Judges: —"With regard to the meeting at Peterloo, when he read in his law books that numbers constituted force, and force terror, and terror illegality, he felt that no one could say the Manchester meeting was not an illegal one."—*Lord Eldon's Speech in the House of Lords.*

"I see Mr. Waithman puts all his nonsense upon the Riot Act not being read; not being read an hour; not being heard, or audibly read. This is a very foolish and very fatal mistake. If persons riotously assembled remain for an hour after the act is read, they are *felons;* but if the act is not read, by the common law they are *rioters*, answerable to the law, as such, the *moment they become rioters;* and I apprehend it is clear that long before the Riot Act passed, there were, in the contemplation of law, riots and rioters; riots which might be put an end to by force, and rioters who might also be put an end to by force, if the riots in which they were engaged could not otherwise be put an end to. This should be laboured in the press, for the contrary is inculcated with such mischievous industry, that the prosecutions on account of this Manchester meeting will otherwise be completely written down long before they can be tried. Soon after the riots of 1780, and between the years 1793 and 1796, there were a great many small works, for general information, published, some very valuable, many very useful, on this topic, and others connected with it, which, if they could be looked up, and again circulated, would do a great deal of good."

As the preceding letter defined the real state of the law respecting riots and tumultuous assemblages, that which followed on the 4th of October showed how little the law on the subject was at that time understood. "Much, unless I mistake the law, might be done under the law as it now stands, if it was understood, and magistrates durst act upon it. The coroner's jury at Oldham does not understand it; those who state the Riot Act was not read, or that it

was not read an hour, don't understand it; those who complain of the magistrates not giving previous notice of the illegality of the meeting don't understand it. They gave notice of the illegality of the first meeting, because those who advertised it advertised what was illegal — choosing a member; but when the advertisement for the meeting stated no illegal purpose, whether the meeting would be illegal could only be determined when it took place, and the magistrates could not advertise against it. But unless the law, by declaration or enactment, is made clear, I know not what fatal consequences may attach upon persons who have been doing their duty, arising out of the ignorance or terror of those who are to administer the law — coroner's juries, trying juries, or even future grand juries. I am glad to see some symptoms of loyalty arising in the city, but it will not do, if parliament does not declare the law, and add to it where it is not sufficient. * * * If parliament will not do what the safety of the country demands, let the responsibility rest with them. Surely it is bold to take it entirely upon ourselves. * * * I still think that we ought to bring parliament together, even if there were reason to apprehend that it would not give efficacious aid to the preservation of the established order of things, in which case very distressing consequences may follow. But I cannot forbear to think, that parliament will either aid us, or if it will not, that the responsibility should rest with them, and that we should not expose ourselves to the upbraidings of those who will be ready enough to tell us that we ought to have applied to parliament, if evil ensues. Indeed it is a little lucky

that the proclamation has issued before government has been compelled to that step by lords lieutenant, nobility, and gentry, in association with the Black Dwarf, Sherwin and Co. — to their shame be it said."

This last paragraph has been extracted from a letter written on the 20th of October; shortly after which date the Chancellor returned to town, and added his wisdom and experience to the large amount of talent and legal knowledge which the Attorney and Solicitor General, Sir Robert Gifford and Sir John Copley, were applying to the preparation of the new code of laws intended to be proposed to parliament on its assemblage.*

But, in addition to the necessity of adapting the laws to the critical state of the times, there existed another urgent ground of anxiety, in the numerical insufficiency of the military force of the kingdom.

* There was another learned barrister, Francis Ludlow Holt, Esq., whom it would be ungrateful in the biographer of Lord Sidmouth not to mention as having afforded his Lordship much valuable assistance on this and on other occasions whenever a sound knowledge of constitutional law, and a laborious research into, and a popular explanation of, questions misunderstood by the community, were required. In such cases Mr. Holt usually came forward with a pamphlet, letter, or paragraph, well calculated to inform the public mind; indeed, two papers written by him with this view in the year 1818, one an argument in refutation of Lord Folkstone's claim, on behalf of magistrates, to visit state prisoners on their own authority, the other an answer to Mr. Brougham's letter to Sir Samuel Romilly, are mentioned with high commendation by Lord Ellenborough in almost the last letters which that eminent judge addressed to Lord Sidmouth.

Mr. Holt was eventually appointed to the Vice Chancellorship of the county of Lancaster, through Lord Sidmouth's recommendation, and died about the year 1844.

Whilst the walls of parliament were ringing with complaints of a standing army, the troops, before the large reduction of the preceding year, would have proved inadequate to the occupation of the principal garrisons, even at a period of profound domestic tranquillity. It may be imagined, therefore, what the state of things now was, when circumstances had rendered the whole manufacturing population of England disaffected. A few facts may be mentioned to show the extreme deficiency of means against which the Home Department had at this time to struggle. When the rioters in Ely held possession of the town of Littleport, the whole regular force that could be collected to oppose them was eighteen dragoons. A detachment of hussars, consisting of the same number, constituted all that could be spared to put down the Derbyshire insurrection. But a yet more striking case remains to be mentioned. On the 18th of September, 1819, whilst Lord Sidmouth was rejoicing in the unusual circumstance of a London jury at length, in the case of Carlisle, convicting a publisher of blasphemous and flagitious writings, he received intelligence of alarming riots in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, especially at Paisley, together with a pressing application for an augmentation of the forces under Sir Thomas Bradford, the General commanding that district. The only mode of answering this demand was by depriving Portsmouth of two regiments, composing the garrison, and supplying their place with marines until the 33d regiment could be brought from Guernsey; and then government had no immediate means of conveying these troops to Scotland except by availing itself of the gracious per-

mission of the Prince Regent, who was at that time cruising in the Channel, under the protection of the Liffey frigate, to employ his Royal Highness's escort for that purpose. This whole arrangement was effected on the 18th of October; and on the same day a regiment of dragoons was ordered from Nottingham, where its presence was still greatly needed, to Carlisle, from whence it might be forwarded to Glasgow, or remain under Sir John Byng, as occasion should require. This was considered a less evil, as Lord Sidmouth informed Lord Bathurst, than "moving the Blues or the Life Guards, either of which he should be extremely unwilling to send to a distance from London and its neighbourhood." On the same busy day Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, by command of the Regent, wrote to Lord Sidmouth from the "Royal George yacht, to express his Royal Highness's pleasure at the extraordinary expedition with which this service had been performed. It has occurred to his Royal Highness," the letter proceeds, "that the battalion of Guards stationed at Brighton should be made disposable; and I am instructed to place it so without the delay of reference to him. His Royal Highness is deeply impressed with the necessity of the most vigorous exertions to put the spirit down, which may yet be considered in an infant state, but which must ere long grow into a giant of strength, to subdue which the crippled means of the country are wholly inadequate. His Royal Highness will look anxiously for your Lordship's daily reports, and commands me to repeat his highest approval of the wisdom and energy displayed by your Lordship in the conduct

of the very arduous and intricate duties of your department."

Such was the untiring energy, such the judicious expedients, by which the government, from the Prince Regent down to its humblest member, endeavoured to compensate for the alarming deficiency of means placed at its disposal. With every care, however, symptoms of weakness could not always be concealed; and a result of such disclosure was a reduction in the number and activity of some of its usual friends, who, attributing to supineness what arose from necessity, became indifferent to an administration, which, as they imagined, no longer exerted itself to encourage and support them. Two modes were now resorted to, for the purpose of augmenting the military force of the kingdom — promoting the formation of corps of yeomanry, and calling out and embodying all the pensioners capable of service, to the amount of 10,000 or 11,000 men, and forming them into battalions to occupy the various garrisons and military posts, and thus set free the regular troops for active operations. Lord Sidmouth vigorously applied himself to the promotion of these objects; their progress, however, was much too gradual for the emergency: the only remaining expedient therefore, during the interim, was to conceal the inadequacy of the force, by its skilful disposition and arrangement; in effecting which object the new cabinet minister, the Duke of Wellington, readily lent his invaluable assistance. An instance of this, which Lord Sidmouth was very fond of relating, will now be described. On the 21st of October his Lordship was anxiously revolving in his office the usual perplexing problem — how the largest number of dis-

affected towns might be kept in order by the smallest amount of disposable force — when his Grace dropped in, and on hearing the difficulty, most kindly said, "Can I be of any use to you? shall I write a few hints to Byng?" The offer, as none will doubt, being gladly accepted, the Duke immediately sat down, and with characteristic energy struck off, and left open, on "the long table," to be copied and forwarded, a most able and elaborate letter of instructions to Sir John Byng, which, when afterwards presented at the Horse Guards, were pronounced by the Duke of York and other competent authorities to be the best that could possibly have been advised for the purpose intended. As that important military document, however, is doubtless treasured by the gallant nobleman to whom it was originally addressed, this biography is not entitled to the use of any portion of its contents.

A letter, however, which his Grace shortly afterwards addressed to Lord Sidmouth on the same subject of military protection, will, by permission, be here introduced.

"My dear Lord, Stratfieldsaye, Dec. 11th, 1819.

"I had not an opportunity of speaking to you last night on the subject of your operations at Carlisle and Newcastle. I strongly recommend to you to order the magistrates at those places to carry into execution, without loss of time, the law against training, and to furnish them with the means of doing so. Do not let us be reproached again with having omitted to carry the laws into execution. * * * By sending to each of these towns about 700 or 800 men, cavalry and infantry, and two pieces of cannon, or, in other words, two of the moveable columns, the force would be more than sufficient to do all that can be required. Rely upon it that, in the circumstances in which we are placed, impression on either side is every thing. If, upon the passing of the

training law, you prevent training either by the use of force or by the appearance of force in the two places above mentioned, you will put a stop at once to all the proceedings of the insurgents. They are like conquerors; they must go forward: the moment they are stopped, they are lost. Their adherents will lose all confidence; and, by degrees, every individual will relapse into his old habits of loyalty or indifference. On the other hand, the moment the loyal see that there is a law which can prevent their practices, and means and inclination and determination to carry it into execution, they will regain courage, and will do every thing that you can desire. In my opinion, if you send the troops, and order that the law shall be carried into execution, you will not be under the necessity of using them; and the good effects of this step will be felt not only in these towns and their neighbourhood, but all over England. Observe, also, that if training is continued after the passing of the law—which it will be unless you send a force to prevent it—the insurgents will gain a very important victory.

"Ever, my dear Lord, yours most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

To convey a clearer impression of the laborious manner in which it was necessary at that time to administer the duties of the Home Department, a letter will now be presented, which Lord Sidmouth addressed to Sir John Byng on the 17th of October.

"My dear Sir,

"From information which has reached me from different quarters, it appears that the 1st of November is the day on which it is now in contemplation that the general rising should take place It is to your district that I look with the greatest anxiety, as it is the seat of the greatest danger—a danger highly aggravated, and in a very considerable degree produced, by intimidation. It is in vain, now, to expect that the inhabitants of Manchester, Blackburn, Bolton, &c. &c. will make any powerful effort, or, indeed, any effort at all, to protect themselves; and the military force under your

command must not be weakened by minute subdivisions. Every exertion will be made to increase its amount; and, with this view, one wing of the 90th regiment will be immediately ordered to march upon Nottingham from Portsmouth, and the other will follow as soon as the 33d is arrived from Guernsey. I should hope, too, that the 52d might be drawn, without risk, from their present quarters into the disturbed part of Lancashire; but this, and every other suggestion of mine on such points, must be left to your own discretion, in which I need not say that my confidence is entire. It would, I own, be a satisfaction to me to hear that further protection could be given to the town and hundred of Blackburn. * * * In reply to an intimation I gave to Mr. Norris, that the force now at Manchester could not be long continued there unless better accommodation were provided, he has assured me that arrangements had been made for that purpose, which were satisfactory to the commanding officer.

"The troops from Sunderland must have arrived at Newcastle most opportunely. The accounts which I received yesterday, from the latter place, were very unpleasant. The two sloops of war, which the Admiralty had sent at my request, were, however, in the Tyne. The Bolton meeting is likely to take place on the 25th.

"I am, &c. &c. SIDMOUTH."

Brighter times, however, were now approaching; and as "Lord Liverpool had at length been convinced that the military force ought immediately to be increased, government were now effecting the augmentation with the greatest possible despatch." This information was transmitted by Lord Sidmouth to Mr. Bathurst on the 26th of October; and his Lordship added his hope, that "the invigorated tone and conduct of the government would have the effect of keeping down the spirit of insurgency, and of giving such confidence to the loyal, as to prevent any formidable explosion. But," he proceeded, "the ter-

ror and despondency prevalent in the West Riding, and at Manchester and its neighbourhood, though somewhat abated by recent measures, are beyond what I could have conceived possible under almost any circumstances in which the country could be placed. Meantime, you will be glad to hear that our friends are zealous; that all approve of the early meeting, and that a very large attendance is considered as certain."

The improving prospects of the country, as the period appointed for the meeting of parliament approached, may be gathered from the tone of the letter inserted beneath, in which his Lordship, on the 7th of November, thanked Mr. Yorke for some valuable suggestions respecting parliamentary measures rendered necessary by the critical state of the times.

"Of the necessity of getting rid of the right of traversing, at least in cases of sedition and seditious libels, we are fully convinced; and a bill is prepared, and will be submitted to parliament for the purpose. * * * Information will be laid before parliament at its meeting, not for the purpose of inquiry — which is impossible till the trials are over — but for that of laying a ground for the measures to be proposed. The law must be made clear in some points, and strengthened in others; particularly with respect to the press, military training and drilling, the fabrication of arms of certain descriptions, and public meetings for political purposes. It was my earnest wish that parliament should meet earlier; but better late than later. There will be a full attendance; and I understand that a very satisfactory disposition is evinced, not only by our friends, but by many of our opponents. How similar, in many respects, are the present times to those of 1792! The meeting of parliament had then been too long delayed; and the expedient for assembling it suddenly, was

afforded by a dance, at Dundee, round a May-pole, which was called the Tree of Liberty. Before the meeting of parliament was announced, all was terror; as soon as the proclamation appeared, the loyal were animated, and the disaffected abashed; and, when parliament met, many, who had been most appalled by the danger, began to question and doubt its existence. Such will be the case at the end of this month; but government must stand forward, and seize the occasion for giving that strength to the law, without which there can be no security to the state."

The meeting of parliament which Lord Sidmouth had so long desired at length arrived. It was opened by the Prince Regent in person on the 23d of November, and immediately proceeded to the transaction of the business, of which, two days previously, Lord Sidmouth had forwarded to Lord De Dunstanville the following syllabus: — "The bills to be proposed, and the information to be laid before parliament, are in readiness. The former are four in number. They relate to seditious meetings, to legal process, by *traversing*, in cases of misdemeanour, to military training, and to the root of all the evil, 'audax licentia' of the press. It will be a satisfaction to you to hear that Lord Wellesley, Lord Grenville, and their friends in the two Houses of parliament, entertain and will express opinions in unison with those of the government, or rather, of all persons of honest and intelligent minds, uninfluenced by party, throughout the kingdom."

The seditious practices in the manufacturing districts, and the necessity of taking immediate measures for their counteraction and suppression, and for checking the dissemination of the doctrines of treason and impiety, constituted the leading features of the

speech from the throne, and of the address founded upon it. To the latter, Earl Grey moved an amendment, of which the prominent point was the conduct of the authorities at Manchester on the 16th of August, into which it pledged the House "to make a diligent and impartial inquiry." The domestic policy of the country, especially in regard to Manchester, being thus singled out for attack, Lord Sidmouth, whose duty it was, as the minister chiefly responsible, to defend the government against the noble Earl, confined his reply to that question. "The magistrates alluded to," he stated, "were not merely magistrates of the town, or appointed by the government, but a committee of twelve county magistrates of the highest respectability, selected by the county in the beginning of July, for the purpose of watching over the conduct of persons whose designs were too evident to be mistaken. From the liberal construction which the high courts of law had invariably placed on unintentional aberrations of magistrates, it was reasonable to expect that a similar indulgence would, if necessary, be extended to those gentlemen; especially when the difficulties and danger of their situation was considered. Their conduct, however, on the day in question required no unusual allowance or presumption in their favour. The fact of an immense assemblage marching in military array, coming in large bodies from a distance, and declaring their object to be the total subversion of the constitution or death — these persons carrying caps of liberty, bearing pikes apparently dipped in blood, and flags inscribed with the most seditious expressions — all this was sufficient to justify every act which the

magistrates had sanctioned." His Lordship next asserted, "with the utmost confidence, and on high authority, not only the illegality, but the treasonable character of the assembly of the 16th of August, and then proceeded to justify himself for addressing the letter to the lords-lieutenant of Chester and Lancaster, communicating the approbation of the government to the magistrates and yeomanry." To prove that he could not with propriety have pursued a different course on that occasion, he made the following plain statement of facts:—"An account of the transactions reached ministers on Tuesday night, the 17th. On Wednesday two of the magistrates, one of whom was Mr. Hay, the chairman of the Salford quarter sessions, arrived in town to give the fullest information to the government. A cabinet council, comprising all the members within reach, and attended by the law officers of the crown, was immediately assembled, to receive the statement and explanations of these gentlemen; and the result was, that the law officers gave it as their opinion that the conduct of the magistrates was completely justified by the necessity under which they acted. With this conviction on the minds of ministers the letter in question was written. If, convinced as they were that the magistrates deserved the approbation of government, they had delayed to communicate it until they had made unnecessary inquiries, they would have acted not only unwisely but unjustly. The parties whose conduct was before them for adjudication had performed a most painful and dangerous duty: they had exposed their lives for the preservation of the public peace; they had explained the necessity which had

compelled them to act; the presumption was in favour of their veracity; and were ministers to say to them, in such a case, 'No, though we approve of your proceedings — though we are of opinion that you acted with proper spirit, temper, and discretion — it still is possible that facts may hereafter come out against you, and therefore, on this vague anticipation, we will refrain from thanking you until we have heard the statement of your accusers?' Would such conduct have been fair, manly, generous, or politic? What would have been thought of it by the other magistrates of the kingdom? Could they, with impunity, temporise in a manner so base and so unjust towards a body of men to whom the protection of the public peace was intrusted?

"On the other topic which had been adverted to — the dismissal of Lord Fitzwilliam from the lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire — he would only say that the different view which that noble Lord and his Majesty's ministers took of the state of the country, and the public declaration which he signed in opposition to their wishes, showed that all confidence between him and them had ceased, and that a separation had become indispensable."

As that was the only occasion on which his Lordship entered into a public defence of his conduct respecting the proceedings at Manchester, it has been thought advisable to omit no portion of the arguments which he employed in his personal justification. A much briefer process, however, will be pursued with reference to the bills for invigorating the executive arm, which passed in the course of this session, as both the necessity for such measures, and

the general nature of their provisions, are considered to have been sufficiently explained in the preceding pages. The apprehension lest parliament should not be found sufficiently alive to the danger of the crisis was speedily dissipated by the divisions in the two Houses on the address, which presented such preponderating majorities for the government as constituted a complete vote of confidence in their favour.*

On the opening of the session a selection of eighty-one papers, relating to the internal state of the kingdom, was presented to both Houses of parliament, by command of the Prince Regent, as the evidence on which ministers desired to ground their application for additional laws.†

On the 29th of November Lord Sidmouth first introduced to the House of Lords some of the bills founded on these documents; and as he availed himself of the occasion to explain the whole series of measures about to be proposed, for the purpose of protecting the peaceful many against the turbulent and tyrannical few, advantage will be taken of the opportunity to present the reader with a brief description of these acts, as they eventually passed, instead of tracing their progress through the various discussions they underwent in the two Houses of parliament.

The bills which his Lordship brought in on the

* In the Lords 34 for the amendment, 159 for the address; in the Commons 150 for the amendment, 381 for the address.

† As Hunt and his associates had traversed until the succeeding Lent assizes, this appeared to the government to be the only mode of disclosing to parliament the proofs they possessed of the disaffected state of the country, without interfering with the course of justice as regarded those parties.

29th were entitled, "An Act to prevent the Training of Persons to the Use of Arms, and to the Practice of Military Evolutions and Exercise;" "An Act to authorise Justices of the Peace in certain disturbed Counties to seize and detain Arms collected or kept for Purposes dangerous to the Public Peace;" and "An Act for the more effectual Prevention and Punishment of blasphemous and seditious Libels;" and that brought in on the 17th of December was entitled "An Act for more effectually preventing seditious Meetings and Assemblies." By the first of these acts meetings and assemblies of persons for the purpose of being trained, or of practising military exercise, were prohibited, and parties so assembling were, on conviction, liable to be punished by fine and imprisonment not exceeding two years. Under the second act justices were empowered to issue warrants for searching for and seizing weapons dangerous to the public peace, and to detain and hold to bail persons found carrying arms under suspicious circumstances. But the provisions of this act were confined to certain counties of England and Scotland which were then in a disturbed state, and to such other counties as should by proclamation be declared to be so disturbed as to make it necessary that its provisions should be enforced therein. The third act authorised the court, in which a verdict should be given, or judgment by default had, against any person for composing or publishing any blasphemous or seditious libel, to order the seizure of all copies of the libel in the possession of such person; such copies to be restored to the defendant if judgment should be arrested or reversed, otherwise, to be disposed of as

the court should direct; and it provided for the punishment of persons convicted of a second offence, but which punishment has since been repealed.

By the fourth act no meetings of more than fifty persons (except county meetings, or meetings of any city or borough convened as therein mentioned) were to be holden, unless in separate parishes, and with notice to a justice of the peace by seven householders. No persons were to attend such meetings but freeholders of the county, or members of the corporation, or inhabitants of the city or parish, &c. for which the meeting should be held, or members of parliament, or voters for such county or city, &c. &c. Persons were prohibited from attending such meetings armed, or with flags or banners. Extensive powers were given to justices for dispersing illegal meetings, and for punishing the parties attending them; and the justices were indemnified in case such parties should be killed or hurt in the endeavour to disperse or apprehend them. By this act, also, places used for lectures or debates, to which persons were admitted on payment of money, were required to be licensed by justices of the peace at their special or quarter sessions, under a penalty of 20*l*.

The second and the last of the above four acts were to remain in force for periods that were limited, and they were not re-enacted.

Besides the four bills brought in by Lord Sidmouth, the Lord Chancellor, on the 29th of November, introduced a bill "to prevent Delay in the Administration of Justice in Cases of Misdemeanour;" and on the 3d of December Lord Castlereagh brought into the House of Commons a bill "to make certain

Publications subject to the Duties of Stamps upon Newspapers, and to restrain the Abuses arising from the Publication of blasphemous and seditious Libels;" which bills, as well as the others, were all passed previous to the adjournment of the two Houses on the 29th of December, and being classed with Lord Sidmouth's four bills, were commonly called The Six Acts.

It only remains to state the result of the trial of Hunt and of his associates. They were tried at York on the 16th of March, 1820, and nine following days, before Mr. Justice Bayley and a special jury, and five of their number, namely, Hunt himself, Johnson, Knight, Healy, and Bamford, were convicted of "unlawfully meeting together, with divers other persons unknown, to a large number, for the purpose of creating discontent and disaffection, and of exciting the King's subjects to hatred of the government and constitution." * On the 15th of May they received judgment from the Court of King's Bench; which was, two years and six months' imprisonment to Hunt, and one year's imprisonment to the others. Thus, the illegality of the meeting was finally pronounced by a British jury.

* 3 Barnewall and Alderson's Reports, p. 566.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1820.

Formation of Veteran Battalions. The Yeomanry augmented. Salutary Effect of the recent Acts of Parliament. Death of King George III. and of the Duke of Kent. Letter from the Princess of Hesse Homburg. Alarming Illness of the new King. Difference between George IV. and his Ministers. Plot to assassinate the King's Ministers long known to the Government. Difficulty felt in dealing with it. Plan for the Arrest of the Conspirators. Source from whence Government derived its Information. Circumstances attending the Arrest of the Conspirators. Public Indignation on the Subject. The Conspirators committed for High Treason. The King's Approval of Lord Sidmouth's Conduct. The Trial and Execution of the Conspirators. Falsehood and Absurdity of the Plea that they were seduced by Edwards. Congratulations. Spirit of Disaffection not yet wholly subdued. The Duke of Wellington recommends calling out the Militia. The Queen returns to England. Bill of Pains and Penalties. Lord Sidmouth orders the Dispersion of the Mob at Charing Cross. Progress of the Queen's Trial. Termination of the Proceedings against her Majesty, a Triumph to neither Party. The Queen's Visit to St. Paul's Cathedral. Lord Sidmouth to the Bishop of Landaff. Effect of the Trial on the Position of the King's Government. Resignation of Mr. Canning. Anxiety of Lord Liverpool. Lord Sidmouth asks Mr. Bathurst to take Mr. Canning's Office pro tempore. *Lord Sidmouth to Lord Hastings and Lord Exmouth on the State of Public Affairs.*

DURING the earliest days of the eventful year 1820, Lord Sidmouth found a cheering occupation, in car-

rying out the legislative measures of the preceding session, and in tracing their happy results. Under the former head, his exertions were unceasing to make the disposable military force of the kingdom equal to any exigency that might arise, by promoting the formation of veteran battalions, and of corps of yeomanry. The advantages of this policy are shown in the following statement, which he made to Mr. Canning on the 6th of January. "Sir John Byng has been just strengthened with three regiments of infantry, in consequence of the occupation of the works at Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Chatham by some of the newly formed veteran battalions." The interest his Lordship took in the augmentation of that valuable and constitutional force, the yeomanry, may be gathered from the terms in which he thanked Mr. Edmund Pollexfen Bastard, M.P. for Devonshire, for his efforts in raising a corps in that county.

"My dear Sir, Richmond Park, 11th January, 1820.

"I am very much pleased with the prospect described in your letter, and have now no doubt that your hopes of raising eight troops will be fully realised. This, for your honour and that of the county of Devon, will be the most considerable instance of public spirit and loyalty, of such a description, that has been displayed since the termination of the war."

His Lordship then remarked, that he "daily received most satisfactory proofs of the good effects of the measures recently adopted by Parliament. The confidence of the loyal was raised, and that of the disaffected depressed in every part of the kingdom." Lord Sidmouth wrote at this period in the same con-

fident tone to Mr. Bathurst and Mr. Pole Carew. "The accounts from the country," he observes to the former, "are improving: that is, the loyal are becoming more confident, and the radicals less so; but we must be constantly on our guard." "The press," he remarked to the latter, "is the 'fons et origo mali.' Its licentiousness, and the facility of circulating libels, are, I trust, materially checked."

"You are, no doubt, aware," he wrote to Lord Exmouth, "that the benefits of the recent measures are already manifest. Not that the dispositions of the principal agitators are in the smallest degree changed; but the means and power of doing mischief are lessened and restrained; and the confidence of the loyal and well-disposed are unquestionably increased and increasing."

Whilst thus his Lordship was rejoicing in these favourable indications, his loyalty was destined to undergo a most distressing shock. On the 22d of January he received a note from Dr. Maton, who had been hastily summoned to Sidmouth, to attend the Duke of Kent, announcing that "his royal Highness was labouring under a most severe inflammation in the region of the diaphragm, and could not be expected to survive more than a day or two." This apprehension was too fatally realised on the 23d; upon which day, Lord Sidmouth, when announcing the afflicting intelligence to Mr. Bathurst, added "in confidence" an intimation that the scene was likely also to be soon closed at Windsor; "a very marked and rapid change having taken place in the King's state within the last week; which kept them

in almost daily expectation of hearing that all was over."

The dreaded yet merciful dispensation which deprived Lord Sidmouth of that venerated Sovereign who had honoured him with so many marks of favour and confidence, and whom he had served with the utmost devotion and fidelity for so protracted a period, occurred on the 29th of January, not from any particular malady, but from the total decay of the vital powers. The anxious and exciting events which immediately succeeded afforded his Lordship no favourable opportunity of fully expressing his sentiments on this solemn occasion; but it will not be doubted that, as he told Lord Talbot, he "cordially shared in all those feelings of veneration, love, and gratitude, which no human being ever could claim to the same amount as their late revered sovereign." These were strong expressions,—too strong, perhaps, even for that occasion; and as such did not usually flow from his Lordship's pen, they constitute a striking indication of the manner in which the event affected him.

That his Lordship was considered by the royal family as mourning more like a friend than a subject, is evidenced by the following unconstrained, pious, and eloquent sentiments, which on the 12th of March a daughter of the departed monarch, herself now deceased, addressed to him from Hesse Hombourg.

"My adored father's death, and the finding him so valued, respected, mourned, and regretted, has gone most deeply to my heart. For himself, dear Angel, the change was undoubtedly a blessed one. He is now at peace, and enjoying the just reward of his

pious, virtuous, and well-spent life. In laying down his earthly crown he has received his celestial one, which can never be lost to him. In the hearts of his children and his subjects he will ever live; and may God in his mercy grant that the virtues of both my excellent parents may be our safeguard and examples through life." Scarcely had that venerable father of his people breathed his last, when a fresh source of anxiety arose in the dangerous illness of the new sovereign, who had hardly ascended his father's throne ere he appeared destined immediately to share his tomb. The circumstances of this alarming event are stated in the annexed letter, which Lord Sidmouth addressed to Earl Talbot on the 3rd of February. "A new calamity has been impending for the last few days, but we may now hope that it will be averted. The situation of his present Majesty was extremely alarming during the greater part of Tuesday night" (Feb. 1st); "but the formidable symptoms have gradually given way, and all apprehensions of a fatal result appear to be over. There is still, however, great cause for anxiety on account of the liability of his Majesty to a fresh attack, to resist which his constitution may have become unequal. The quantity of blood taken from him in the course of twelve or thirteen hours, by the advice of Dr. Tierney, was enormous, and to that alone the preservation of his Majesty's life is, through the blessing of Providence, to be ascribed. * * * There are, however, very painful obstacles to a rapid recovery. How much better is it to weep over departed excellence in the nearest and dearest of all connexions," — alluding to the very

recent death of Countess Talbot — "than to be harrassed by living misconduct."

Parliament, which, on the demise of the crown, in pursuance of statutes, had assembled *pro formâ*, on Sunday the 30th of January, after employing three days in the swearing in of members, had adjourned to the 17th of February. The interval was partly occupied by anxious discussions between the sovereign and his ministers, which, as Lord Sidmouth informed the Viceroy of Ireland in the subjoined note, very nearly terminated in a dissolution of the government.*

"My dear Lord, Richmond Park, Feb. 13th, 1820.

"I am very sorry not to have written to you yesterday; but if you knew how the day was passed, you would not be surprised at the omission.

"The government is in a very strange, and, I must acknowledge, in a precarious state. I cannot enter into particulars by letter; but you shall be made acquainted with them when I have the pleasure of seeing your Lordship in town. In the mean time, I can only say, that it does not appear to me to be probable that a council will be held on an early day.

"Believe me, &c. &c. SIDMOUTH.

"The Earl Talbot."

The next paper in the series introduces the reader to a new and appalling feature of that eventful period. It is a letter which, on the 23d of February, Sir Benjamin Bloomfield addressed to Lord Sidmouth,

* The subject of this disagreement, as stated in the Life of Lord Eldon, vol. ii. p. 367., was the King's urging his ministers to obtain for him a divorce. This they resisted as long as the Queen should refrain from any obtrusive proceeding; but the King could only be satisfied by receiving an assurance from them that should her Majesty at any time force herself into notice by returning to England, they would then accede to his desire.

expressing the King's desire to see his Lordship, and stating that "his Majesty was *perfectly composed*, and was greatly struck with the general vigilance displayed by the police under his Lordship's guidance and direction." These remarkable expressions related to an atrocious conspiracy to assassinate the King's ministers, with which the Government had been for some time acquainted, and which was intended to be carried into execution on the 23d, when the whole fifteen were expected to assemble at a cabinet dinner at Lord Harrowby's house, in Grosvenor Square. Arthur Thistlewood, the ringleader in this ferocious plot, had, it will be recollected, been condemned in May, 1818, to one year's imprisonment in Horsham gaol, for sending a challenge to Lord Sidmouth. On obtaining his release, he appears to have returned to his treasonable practices, with a strong desire of revenge superadded to his previous feeling of hatred to the government; and, in the autumn of 1819, was reported to Lord Sidmouth as being engaged with Wooller in a tour of encouragement and inspection to Nottingham and other disaffected districts. But although general insurrections were fixed upon for the 1st of November, and again for the 13th of December, the latter of which appeared so threatening that several Lord Lieutenants — namely, the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Lonsdale, Lord Stamford, and Lord Lascelles — were despatched from town on the 8th, to their respective counties ; such was the effect of the vigilance of government, and of the energy displayed by parliament in the new enactments, that each of these schemes was successively relinquished as hopeless. The result, however, in one instance, of the

"masterly style in which," as Mr. Steele observed, "Lord Sidmouth had done his business," was, that Thistlewood and a few others, despairing of success through open violence, began to meditate a yet darker crime. The earliest intimation of the detection of this plot is contained in a note of the 5th of January from the Duke of Wellington, which states that his Grace "had just heard that Lord Sidmouth had discovered another conspiracy, and was therefore ready to go to him, if he should be wanted, at a moment's notice." Lord Sidmouth used to state, that he early became acquainted with the particulars of this scheme, which were of so frantic and sanguinary a character as at first hardly to appear credible. Facts, however, too clearly proved that there were, at the least, from twenty to thirty persons who had resolved to obtain admittance into the house where the ministers were assembled at their customary weekly dinner, under pretence of presenting a note, and to massacre the whole; and then, taking advantage of the panic which this would occasion to set fire to the barracks, seize the artillery, Mansion House, Bank, and Tower, and establish a provisional government! Such a plan, of which the absurdity almost equalled the criminality, the ministers probably would scarcely have regarded as seriously adopted, but that they knew the desperate character of the men, and had ascertained that a depôt of arms and ammunition had actually been formed at the lodgings of one of them. Lord Sidmouth had also been apprised that, on a previous occasion, when the cabinet dinner was to take place at Lord Westmoreland's, Thistlewood and one of his accomplices had resolved to wait at his Lordship's

door, in order to observe the respective ministers alight from their carriages, and thus make themselves better acquainted with their persons. Accordingly, when, at the appointed hour, his Lordship drove up to the house in Grosvenor Square, he saw Thistlewood standing near, and attentively watching his movements*; and on his afterwards mentioning the circumstance to his colleagues, he found that some of them, though not apprised of what was to occur, had also remarked the proceedings of the two suspicious by-standers with some uneasiness. Lord Sidmouth was also aware that the conspirators had been disconcerted by the necessary suspension of the cabinet dinners, in consequence, first, of the Christmas recess, and afterwards of the King's death, and had debated the expediency of not awaiting their resumption, but of making the attempt on the night of the King's funeral. Government, however, was thought too well prepared for that project to be advisable, and consequently the attempt was deferred until Wednesday the 23d of February, when it was understood that the cabinet dinner would take place at Lord Harrowby's house, in Grosvenor Square, which point was selected as affording, if required, greater facilities of escape into the country.†

* The two conspirators had on this occasion an unusually good opportunity of making themselves acquainted with his person. For, on his Lordship entering his carriage, the footman had closed the door on the skirt of his coat, and was now obliged to walk round to the opposite side of the carriage in order to liberate him.

† Downing Street and the Admiralty, where the two preceding dinners had been held, being *culs de sac*, were considered by the conspirators too dangerously situated for their purpose. Lord Harrowby's was the first cabinet dinner after their plan was matured, occurring in a locality of which they approved.

It was now a subject of anxious consideration, for the government to decide what, under the circumstances, was best to be done. Had they at once seized the conspirators, and brought them to trial, the whole plot would have been attributed to the invention of ministers, or the instigation of spies, the evidence would have failed to convince a London jury, and a triumphant acquittal would have set the miscreants again loose upon society, to renew their projects with, perhaps, better success. On the other hand, to await the attack, even after making every preparation possible for resistance, involved consequences much too serious to be rashly encountered. Instead therefore of resorting to either of these expedients, the government resolved to allow the plot to proceed unmolested, to the verge of execution, and then to arrest the conspirators, under circumstances which could leave no reasonable doubt of their guilty intentions. It was known that these parties had fixed upon and engaged a stable and loft in Cato Street *,—a retired street running parallel with the Edgeware Road,—as a depôt for their arms and ammunition, and a rendezvous from whence they might conveniently set

* The Attorney-General, in his opening, described it as "an obscure street having a very narrow entrance at each end, only one of which was accessible by a horse or carriage. The east end led into John Street, the west into Queen Street, both of which streets ran into the Edgeware Road. The stable was the first building on the right hand side on entering from John Street. It was nearly opposite to a small public-house called the Horse and Groom, which was the place where Ruthven, Wright, and one or two more policemen, mustered in plain clothes about six o'clock on the evening of the 23d of February, in order to watch the motions of the conspirators, and be ready to join Mr. Birnie's party on its arrival."

out on their murderous expedition; and a determination was formed to endeavour to apprehend them in this place when just on the point of sallying forth. The great difficulty in effecting this object was, to prevent the conspirators from learning that their plans had been discovered; for had they once suspected this, their detection would have been impossible, and such was their anxiety on this point, that through the whole of the preceding day and night, Lord Harrowby's house was constantly watched by two of their number. Every thing therefore in that quarter likely to awaken suspicion was carefully avoided; and although the ministers had resolved not to attend the dinner, but after dining in private to assemble at Lord Liverpool's, and there await the result, the preparations in Grosvenor Square were allowed to proceed, and the servants led to expect the guests at the usual hour of seven. It was arranged that the apprehension of the conspirators should be effected by Mr. Birnie, the police magistrate, who at the proper time was to proceed at once to Cato Street for that purpose, accompanied by a strong party of police officers and a detachment of the Foot Guards, which he was to call for in his way past Portman Street barracks. * One of the most delicate parts of the arrangement, and the only one which in the execution did not fully answer its intended purpose, was by what previous steps to ensure the troops being ready to attend Mr. Birnie instantly, without

* Mr. Birnie had established himself in a position not far from the seat of action, from whence he set policemen on the watch, who reported to him their observations, which he forwarded to the Home Office as occasion required.

exciting the suspicion of the conspirators, who, it was known, exercised surprising vigilance in watching every act and motion of the government. To effect this object, the strictest orders were issued some little time previously, that at the Portman Street barracks a party of soldiers should be constantly ready to turn out at a moment's notice; and so anxious was Lord Sidmouth on this point as the day approached, that he communicated specially with the Horse Guards, to ascertain whether, in military phraseology, the order really meant what it appeared to mean; and also whether its strict and *literal* observance could be perfectly relied upon.

It must have long been obvious to the reader from this account of Lord Sidmouth's preparations, that his Lordship received frequent and accurate information of the conspirators' proceedings. The principal informant was a modeller and itinerant vendor of images, named Edwards, who first opened himself at Windsor, as early as the month of November, to Sir Herbert Taylor, then occupying an important official situation in the establishment of George III. Sir Herbert wisely lost no time in introducing him to the authorities at the Home Office, who from that moment, until the catastrophe in Cato Street, maintained a constant communication with him;—employing during the interim every practicable opportunity of verifying his reports through the medium of the police. From this person a knowledge of the plot was thus derived very shortly after its formation. The cow-keeper, therefore, named Thomas Hidon, who presented the letter to Lord Harrowby in the Park on the 22d of February, and who ap-

peared afterwards as a witness at the trial, only conveyed the same intelligence to the government which had previously become known to them through other channels*: his testimony, however, was found extremely useful in corroborating that of Edwards, whose revelations were proved by the sequel to have been, in the main, correct. It appears from the official report of the subsequent trials, that there was also a third party, an Irishman named Dwyer, who being introduced by Davidson to Thistlewood, was by the latter entrusted with the secret; and who, on revealing what he had seen and heard to a Major James, was very properly advised by that gentleman to go to the Home Office, which he did about one o'clock P. M. on the 23d. Thus forewarned, therefore, and thus prepared, Lord Sidmouth viewed without apprehension the arrival of the eventful day. In the course of that afternoon the conspirators were observed to be secretly conveying sacks containing arms and ammunition into the rendezvous in Cato Street; and at length, when the appointed hour of the cabinet dinner approached, and it was calculated that the traitors would be congregated for the enterprise, Mr. Birnie, accompanied by about twelve or fourteen police officers who had been ordered to assemble, well armed, at seven o'clock, without being informed of the purpose for which they were required, set forth with a warrant for the apprehension of the parties. Whilst on his way, he received intelligence

* It is seldom that an useful service to the public can be so easily rewarded as was the case in the present instance. Hidon's ambition was fully gratified by a hackney coach licence, then technically termed "a pair of plates."

that the conspirators had manifested symptoms of hesitation and confusion, on hearing from their scouts that the ministers had not assembled at Lord Harrowby's house at the expected hour *, and he consequently hastened his progress lest they should disperse before his arrival. Upon reaching the barracks he found that the soldiers, instead of being ready to turn out *instantaneously* as was intended, were only in a state of forward preparation to be called out, and that a brief space of time must consequently elapse before they could accompany him. Apprehending therefore that if he were to lose these few but important moments, he should find the place deserted, he hurried forward with only his own men, leaving directions for the detachment to follow him with all possible speed. This doubtless the gallant soldiers did; but the short delay, and their inability to find the entrance into Cato Street from ignorance of the locality, proved fatal to the complete success of the enterprise; for on the police officers entering the loft, which they could only do singly and by a ladder, and declaring their object to the twenty-four or twenty-five persons whom they found assembled there, Thistlewood, after stabbing Smithers, the foremost of them, through the heart, and ordering the lights to

* It happened that the Archbishop of York, who lived next door to Lord Harrowby, gave a dinner on that day, and the conspirators were for some time deceived by seeing the Archbishop's visitors arrive. The usual hour of the cabinet dinners was seven, but it was not until eight o'clock that Lord Harrowby wrote a note to his butler to countermand the preparations. The dinner was relinquished, to avoid the danger to which the ministers might have been exposed had the conspirators set out on their enterprise before Mr. Birnie's arrival in Cato Street.

be extinguished, made a rush with his companions, which the officers could not withstand, and thus in the darkness and confusion, and after the exchange of several shots, he, Brunt, Adams, who was afterwards admitted king's evidence, and about twelve others, effected their escape.* The piquet now arrived most opportunely to intercept the retreat of the remainder, and to gain possession of the loft from whence the officers had been expelled; and after some firing and no slight resistance, during which Captain Fitzclarence and Serjeant Legge were exposed to considerable danger, nine prisoners, including Ings, Tidd, and Davidson, and a quantity of arms and ammunition, were secured.†

Captain Fitzclarence stated on the trial that it was between eight o'clock and a quarter past when his detachment reached the stables; and as it was seven o'clock when the police officers were ordered to attend at Bow Street, this gives the time with sufficient accuracy.

Lord Sidmouth, in after years, used to describe the regret and mortification of the ministers when

* The police officers appear to have behaved with great heroism on this occasion. Besides poor Smithers, policeman Westcott was wounded in the arm by Thistlewood with a pistol ball, a second, Wright, was stabbed in the right side by Tidd, and a third, named Brookes, was shot in the neck and shoulder by Ings. Comparatively recent as this occurrence was, the author has found, upon inquiry, that neither Mr. Birnie, nor one of the persons who accompanied him, is now alive.

† It was deposed at the trial by Adams, the king's evidence, that Ings declared that he would bring away the heads of Lord Castlereagh and Lord Sidmouth, and that he was provided with two bags and a large knife for that purpose; and it was a striking corroboration of this testimony, that Brookes, the police officer who pursued and secured Ings, swore that he had upon him two haversacks and a long knife when he was taken.

their suspense was first broken by intelligence that Smithers was slain, and that Thistlewood had escaped. On this latter point, however, his Lordship consoled them with an assurance, which fortunately he was enabled to fulfil, that he would present that criminal before them as a prisoner before the following evening. Accordingly, early the next morning, Thistlewood was apprehended in bed at No. 8. White Street, Moorfields; and thus the only evil which resulted from his momentary escape was a charge to the public of 1000*l.*, offered by government as a reward for his discovery. Brunt also was seized at his lodgings in Gray's Inn Lane; and in his and Ings's rooms were found above a thousand ball cartridges, a large quantity of gunpowder, pike-handles, fire-balls, hand grenades, and other instruments of destruction.

The above brief description of one of the most heartless and inconceivable plots that ever entered into the human imagination comprises the substance of Lord Sidmouth's own reminiscences on the subject, as related to the author in numerous conversations, and as corroborated in every point which required confirmation by reference to the Sidmouth papers, or to the recollection of survivors. All England rung with astonishment and horror at this dreadful instance of atrocious depravity, and at the scandal and infamy which it had brought upon the national character. As Lord Sidmouth observed to Earl Delawarr, "even the most hardened incredulity was staggered by it, and party feelings appeared to be absorbed in those of indignation, which the lower orders had also evinced very strikingly upon the occasion."

On Sunday, February 27th, Lord Sidmouth with

the rest of the King's ministers, publicly returned thanks to the Almighty, in the Chapel Royal, St. James's, for their merciful preservation. Numerous were the letters on this subject which now poured in upon his Lordship, on all sides, from anxious friends. The King had removed to Brighton for the recovery of his health; but such was his Majesty's anxiety respecting these events, that he "desired from Lord Sidmouth a *prĕcis* of each day's proceedings." In observance of this command, his Lordship, on the 3d of March, informed his Majesty, through the medium of Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, that "eleven of the conspirators had that day been fully convicted for trial on the charges of high treason and murder, and three for high treason only. Three had also been remanded for further examination, and warrants had been issued against several others. It daily becomes more evident," his Lordship added, "that an expectation prevailed amongst the disaffected in the northern parts of the kingdom, that an important blow would be struck in London previous to the expiration of the month of February." An interesting result of this daily correspondence with the Pavilion was the frequent expression of royal approval of Lord Sidmouth's meritorious services. Thus, on the 8th of March, Sir B. Bloomfield was instructed to observe:—"The King read your Lordship's letter with great interest, and took occasion to bestow the highest praise upon the zeal and vigilance you had displayed, and which were now unfolding themselves in the detection of crimes which have brought our land to the condition

heretofore reserved only for revolutionary France."* Four days afterwards his Majesty's gracious approbation was again expressed in a manner peculiarly felicitous. "The King's remark upon your Lordship's letter of this morning was, '*He is the Duke of Wellington upon home service.*' His Majesty's persuasion is full and complete, that if England is to be preserved England, the arrangements you have made will lead to that preservation."

It now only remains briefly to relate the particulars of that act of retributive justice by which the destruction prepared by those wicked men for the King's ministers was made to recoil upon their own heads. On the 8th of March a special commission was issued to the Lord Chief Justices Abbott and Dallas, Chief Baron Richards, Mr. Justice Richardson, and Baron Garrow, for the trial of these offenders, which was opened on the 27th of March and two following days, when true bills were found against Arthur Thistlewood, William Davidson, James Ings, John Thomas Brunt, Richard Tidd, and six others, for high treason, and against six of the same parties for murder. On Monday, the 17th of April, the commission again assembled at the Old Bailey, when Thistlewood was put on his trial for high treason; and as the facts were too clear for contradiction, and the offence too heinous for extenuation, after an inquiry which extended into the third day, he was found guilty on the third and fourth counts, which charged him with high treason, in conspiring to levy war, and in actually levying war, against the King.

* The Duke de Berri had just then been assassinated in Paris.

The trial of Ings, Brunt, Tidd, and Davidson, followed with the same result, after which the remaining prisoners were allowed to withdraw their plea of not guilty, and to plead guilty, in order that they might experience the mercy of the crown. On the 27th of April the whole of the prisoners were sentenced to death by Chief Justice Abbott; and on the 1st of May the five principal conspirators underwent the sentence of high treason with all its appalling forms at the usual place of execution. Four of them, who had proclaimed themselves Deists, carried out to the last moment the awful principles, if such they could be called, of their unbelief, and left the world, as one of them remarked, "to find out" — alas! too soon, to their cost, too late for their benefit — "the great secret." The fifth, Davidson, a man of colour, through the exertions of the Ordinary, Mr. Cotton, was reclaimed, at the very close of the eleventh hour, to the paths of Christianity, and died acknowledging, apparently with unfeigned contrition, the magnitude of his offence, and imploring the mercy and intervention of the Redeemer.

Thistlewood, in a violent and offensive address to the Court previous to his receiving sentence, had imputed the whole conception and infamy of the conspiracy to the informer Edwards. It is impossible, however, to suppose that any person whatever, not being an idiot, could, unless with a willing, nay, an approving mind, be persuaded by another to commit the crimes of high treason and murder; and still more incredible is it that Thistlewood, who was evidently an educated man, possessing considerable

abilities, should have been deliberately seduced into such an atrocious enterprise by a person in every respect inferior to himself. And this is obvious on the face of his own statement, which describes Edwards as discarded by his landlord for his "bad character, immorality, and swindling conduct;" as, in short, "in every sense of the word a villain of the deepest atrocity." Yet this was the instrument who, if we believe Thistlewood, induced him, after aspiring to the rank of a leader amongst the reformers, to engage, contrary both to his judgment and conscience, in an undertaking of the deepest criminality. With the exception, therefore, of the near relatives of the executed malefactors, who indicted Edwards for treason, and of Alderman Wood, who, in a correspondence with Lord Sidmouth, which he published, wanted his Lordship to detain George Edwards in the country by an illegal exercise of power, the miserable plea that any encouragement given by Edwards could entitle Thistlewood and his associates to the smallest amount of sympathy or commiseration under their enormous crime was universally discarded. Hence men of every party, rank, and degree, who desired, with Dr. Adam Clarke, "the honour of the ever-blessed God, loyalty to their King, and peace and good will amongst their fellow-subjects," supported the government and laws, and cordially agreed in the following sentiments of that pious and learned divine, with which the present notice of this painful subject will be concluded:—

"Most feelingly do I thank God, and congratulate your Lordship on your escape from the destruction

threatened against yourself, and your noble and honourable companions in the labours of the state. May the Almighty have your Lordship and family in his continual keeping, and crown you with the honours of your country, and the glories of his kingdom."

A desire to present a connected review of the above proceedings has carried the narrative beyond the regular course of events; to which, therefore, as far as Lord Sidmouth was concerned therein, it is necessary now to revert. The conviction of Hunt and his companions in the month of March, at the assizes at York, has already been noticed. It might have been expected that this satisfactory circumstance, added to the horror excited by the event in Cato Street, and the strength afforded to the government by the recent enactments, would have deprived the evil spirit of sedition of its last hope of success. The disaffected, however, possessed perseverance worthy of a far better cause; and their exercise of it induced Lord Sidmouth to inform the King, in his daily report of the 9th of March, "that the committees had met more frequently of late in several parts of the kingdom, and that it was evident they were in close communication with each other, and on the watch for a favourable opportunity of exciting disturbance, or of striking a blow." That opportunity, as the radical leaders appear to have thought, had now nearly arrived; for on the 21st of March Lord Sidmouth informed the Duke of Wellington that "the accounts from Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, &c. &c., were extremely unsatisfactory, and that a

simultaneous explosion appeared to be meditated at an early period." These indications of impending danger led to an immediate investigation as to the amount of military force which the government had at its command to meet any serious contingency which might arise either at home or abroad; and from this it appeared that although the country was, at the moment, free from any actual disturbance, the Commander-in-Chief had not a single regiment, either of cavalry or infantry, at his disposition, to answer any new demand that might occur, without withdrawing it from some service in which it was at present employed. This fact induced the Duke of Wellington to point out to Lord Sidmouth the great importance of organising without loss of time the whole of the militia of the United Kingdom in order that the government might have some disposable force in reserve, upon which it could rely, in case attempts should be made to execute any of the schemes which, there could be no doubt, were then in agitation. It does not appear from the papers of Lord Sidmouth, that any immediate steps were taken in furtherance of his Grace's valuable suggestion, which is only thus cursorily alluded to, in order to show the extreme difficulty which Lord Sidmouth must have experienced in preserving peace, with such slender means at command, during the anxious times which now ensued.

It was during the interval of tranquillity between the Cato Street conspiracy and the Queen's trial, that Lord Sidmouth's paternal feelings were gratified by the marriage of his second son, the present

Viscount, to Miss Young, and that the writer of this biography was honoured with the hand of his Lordship's second daughter.

A circumstance was now impending — the return of Queen Caroline to England — calculated to supply the disaffected with more effectual means of harassing the King's government than they had ever possessed before. The unfortunate position in which their Majesties had long stood towards each other being such as to render a satisfactory accommodation altogether hopeless, the divisions and heart-burnings which must necessarily result from the existence of rival courts, and two royal establishments in the same metropolis at the same time, were so obvious, that all sensible persons united in hoping that the Queen would wisely prefer retirement, tranquillity, and independence abroad, to splendour and anxiety at home. At this period, therefore, strong expectations were entertained that her Majesty would listen to the advice of those who were wisely recommending the former course for her adoption.

The shouts, however, which welcomed the Queen of England on her arrival in the British metropolis, on the 6th of June, too plainly informed the peaceable and reflecting members of the community, that all hopes of an arrangement were at an end, and that the disunion which unhappily prevailed between the two most exalted personages in the realm must now, too probably, be extended also to their subjects.*

* One of the modes in which the mob expressed their joy at the Queen's return was by nocturnal attacks on the windows of obnoxious individuals. Lord Sidmouth's residence sustained three

Lord Sidmouth had fully coincided with his colleagues in the decision they had formed at the commencement of the reign, to take no steps whatever with reference to a divorce, as long as her Majesty should refrain from returning to England. He also

successive sieges, all of which it was the narrator's fate to witness. On the first night, Dr. Baillie was visiting an invalid member of the family when the house was assailed; and the expressions of surprise with which he diversified his medical instructions as each intrusive missile formed acquaintance with the window shutters, afforded Lord Sidmouth materials for one of his most amusing anecdotes.

On the second evening, a very large family party happened to be assembled in the house, and the garrison being thus strong, it sallied forth, headed by Lord Exmouth, and attacked the assailants, who, disconcerted possibly by this unusual system of tactics, instantly dispersed. One prisoner was taken, a juvenile printer, who, by his insolence, which was consummate, obtained for himself the glory of a night's imprisonment, instead of a lecture. The third attack occurred on a Wednesday evening, whilst Lord Sidmouth was attending the cabinet dinner. It was feeble and of brief duration; and as no further annoyance was anticipated by the police officers, the narrator, who had been left in charge, retired to his lodgings in the same street. Shortly afterwards he heard the mob returning, and hastened back to his Lordship's door, against which the watchman had placed himself. Before, however, they could gain admittance, the Philistines were upon them, filling the whole footway, and hemming them up in the entrance. At this moment a carriage dashed rapidly down the street, drew up at the door, and Lord Sidmouth exclaimed from within it — "Let me out; I must get out:" but another, and a commanding voice, replied — "You shall not alight; drive on;" and instantly the carriage bounded forward, and disappeared, but not before the glass of the window nearest the speaker had been shivered to atoms by a stick or stone. In a moment afterwards, at a signal given, the mob dispersed, leaving the watchman and his companion the only occupants of the street. In a few minutes the same carriage returned, escorted by a small party of the Life-Guards. It was that of the Duke of Wellington, and contained his Grace, Lord Eldon, and Lord Sidmouth.

entirely agreed with Lord Liverpool in the sentiment quoted by Lord Hutchinson, in his letter to Mr. Brougham, that "if her Majesty should be so ill-advised as to come over to this country, there must be an end to all negotiation and compromise," and "immediate proceedings must be taken against her." In short, to Lord Sidmouth, as a cabinet minister, belonged his full share of the responsibility attached to the Queen's trial, and to the proceedings consequent thereto; but as that was only a fifteenth portion of the whole amount, and as his Lordship took no part in the parliamentary discussions, being, in truth, fully occupied in preserving the peace of the country, it does not appear necessary in this work to take any particular notice of those distressing proceedings.

The second reading of the Bill of Pains and Penalties, or in other words, the commencement of the examination of evidence, touching the Queen's conduct, before the House of Lords, had been fixed for the 17th of August; and as this unhappy inquiry seemed to have called into activity all the evil spirits and passions of the times, Lord Sidmouth's exertions to maintain the tranquillity of the metropolis were almost unexampled. His Lordship's utmost vigilance, however, could not wholly secure himself and other noble peers from insult on their way to parliament for the fulfilment of their duty. During the period of the inquiry, Lord Exmouth was his guest at Richmond Park, and numerous were the little adventures which befell their Lordships, as they daily proceeded together on foot from the Home Office to the House

of Lords.* No serious insult, however, was at any time experienced; neither did Lord Sidmouth, though constantly threatened in anonymous letters, and having frequently, as in the cases of Thistlewood and others, very desperate characters to deal with, ever encounter any actual assaults or danger, in his daily journeys, often at very late hours, to and from Richmond Park. On those occasions he usually drove himself in an old-fashioned open whiskey, and at all periods of excitement loaded pistols were placed on the seat for the use of himself and his companion; but, providentially, there never was any necessity to employ them. Probably his confidence and fearlessness generated respect; for he observed, that the same persons who at the commencement of the inquiry into the Queen's conduct saluted him with hisses as he passed by, before its conclusion fell into the habit of touching their hats to him.

His Lordship frequently remarked, that one of his most anxious moments was at the time of her Majesty's arrival in town, when a portion of the military stationed at the Mews at Charing Cross manifested symptoms of discontent at the inconvenience and crowded state of their barracks, and were therefore immediately ordered off, in two divisions, on two suc-

* In consequence of an injury on the knee from the kick of a horse, Lord Sidmouth at that time required, when walking, the support of a friend's arm. On one of these occasions, when Lord Castlereagh was affording that assistance, in the absence of Lord Exmouth, they encountered much hissing and groaning from a mob through which they were passing in Parliament Street. "Here we go," observed Lord Sidmouth, "the two most popular men in England." "Yes," Lord Castlereagh rejoined, "through a grateful and admiring multitude."

cessive mornings, to Portsmouth. The night before the last detachment marched, a formidable mob assembled around the barracks at Charing Cross, calling to the soldiers within to come out and join them. Lord Sidmouth, who had been hastily summoned from his friend Mr. Duncombe's house, in Arlington Street, where he was dining, on passing the spot in the way to his office, found this tumult at its height; and instantly seeing the danger of allowing it to proceed, with the King's palace close at hand on one side, and the government offices on the other, he hastened to the Horse Guards, called out the troop of the 2d Life Guards, under Captain Ridout, which was on duty, and gave them his personal orders to disperse the mob. This object was immediately effected, but not without the application of considerable force. His Lordship indeed was of opinion, that had the circumstance occurred at a distance from the metropolis, the means that were necessarily employed to suppress this disturbance would have subjected the government to the full proportion of invective usually lavished upon it on such occasions: in consequence, however, as his Lordship conjectured, of the approximation of the danger, not a word of complaint was ever uttered on this subject.*

* During the progress of this tedious inquiry, Lord Sidmouth was deprived of two highly valued friends — Dr. Busby, Dean of Rochester, and Mr. Hatsell. The former, who had been his Lordship's early school and college acquaintance, died in the month of September, whilst on a tour in the Highlands. His character was drawn by the Bishop of Hereford in the subjoined extract, dated September the 12th: — "The few friends of early years that still remain, do, if possible, become more valuable. Alas! poor Busby. His death was yesterday mentioned to me abruptly, and my heart

The postponement of the proceedings in the House of Lords from the 8th of September to the 3d of October, to afford her Majesty's advisers time to collect the witnesses and prepare her defence, brought no relief to Lord Sidmouth, who found it impossible to leave his post for a single day. This, indeed, he justly regarded as the most formidable crisis the country had experienced since the conclusion of the general peace, and he therefore effected his preparations with a caution proportionate to the danger. His feelings at that period he expressed on various occasions, especially on the 24th of September, when replying to a former colleague, who from his retirement had addressed the annexed remarks to his friend in office:—"I cannot describe to you how grievously I suffer, and have suffered, on account of the dangerous and deplorable situation in which our country, the King's government, indeed all of us, have been so long placed—a situation out of which, I profess, I see no satisfactory, indeed no safe, deliverance. As far as I can judge, however, the conduct of yourself and colleagues in general seems to have been every thing that could be expected from honour, wisdom,

sunk at the communication. For evenness of temper, pleasantry of manners, firmness of mind, sound principles, right judgment, honourable conduct, and fidelity of attachment, he was a man of decided and amiable character."

As regards Mr. Hatsell, he has been so frequently mentioned in these volumes, and is so universally known as the learned and experienced chief clerk of the House of Commons, whose usefulness still survives, in his invaluable book of "Precedents," that it is only necessary to add, that he closed a green and happy old age of eighty-six, without suffering or previous illness, at his house at Marden, on the 25th of October.

and steadiness, under the most novel, embarrassing, and trying circumstances."

"In venting your feelings," Lord Sidmouth replied, "you have precisely expressed mine: —

> 'Imo in corde pudor, mixtoque insania luctu,
> Fuimus Troes' —

and all that just and honest pride which once gave comfort and dignity to a state of existence in this country, is nearly cancelled and obliterated.
I am, however, much more under the influence of indignation than of any feeling which approaches to despondency."

The Queen's defence terminated on the 26th of October; and as this singular inquiry drew towards a conclusion, the interest attached to it naturally became more exciting, and the position of the government more unpleasant. This Lord Sidmouth intimated to Mr. Bathurst on the 27th, in the following terms: — "Matters here are in a critical state. Fear and faction are actively and not unsuccessfully at work; and it is possible that we may be in a minority, and that the fate of the government may be decided in a very few days.
The Attorney-General has acquitted himself to-day most ably and powerfully." Sir Robert Gifford's exertions appear to have produced their effect, since, two days afterwards, the report to the same party was as follows: — "Some change has taken place since I last wrote to you. The Attorney-General has made a strong impression, which has been well followed up by Copley. The case is indeed overwhelming. * * * At all events, I am satisfied that

defeat itself is better than retreat." The result of the investigation is well known. It was neither a defeat nor a retreat, but a mixture of both. The second reading of the Bill of Pains and Penalties was carried on the 6th of November, by a majority of 28, the third reading, four days afterwards, by one of 9 only. Upon this Lord Liverpool announced that, "considering the state of public feeling, and the division of sentiment so nearly balanced, just evinced by their Lordships, the King's ministers had come to the determination not to proceed further with the measure."

This conclusion, by which neither side obtained a victory, was, to a certain extent, a disappointment to both; for the Queen did not succeed in establishing her innocence, and the ministers failed in carrying their bill. As far as the latter were concerned, and, judging merely from the result, this, probably, was the safest and least inconvenient mode in which the question could have been decided. For, on one hand, the government was enabled, by the force of moral character, to maintain its position under so severe a shock, and, on the other, popular excitement, satisfied by the extrication of the Queen, not only gradually subsided, but also resisted, beyond expectation, all mischievous attempts to rekindle it.

Any hope of a respite from anxiety which Lord Sidmouth might have founded on the prorogation of parliament was speedily dissipated by an announcement, which the Queen made to the authorities of St. Paul's, of her Majesty's intention to attend divine service in that Cathedral on Wednesday, the 29th of November. This led to a long correspondence

between Dr. Van Mildert, then Bishop of Llandaff and Dean of St. Paul's, and Lord Sidmouth, the purport of which will be best explained by a few extracts from the letters of the latter: —

"Whitehall, Nov. 21st.

"In reply to a question stated by your Lordship, I have to acquaint you that it is wholly out of the power of the government to prevent her Majesty's intention of attending divine service in St. Paul's Cathedral from being carried into effect. It is, however, incumbent upon us, and upon myself in particular, to suggest and adopt such measures as may render its accomplishment as little hazardous as possible to the peace of the metropolis.

"The indignation expressed by your Lordship on this occasion is no more than strictly becomes your station and character. At the present moment, nothing is so much to be dreaded and reprobated as fear and apathy; and we must feel strongly, and act resolutely, if we are to entertain a reasonable hope of conquering the difficulties and dangers which surround us; but, if we are not wanting to ourselves, I have no doubt of the result. The outrage at Ewelme* has drawn forth from the public an expression of respect for your Lordship, which, for a moment, was lost sight of by a part of your deluded flock."

"Nov. 23d.

"It cannot, I trust, be necessary for me to express my decided opinion, in concurrence with that of your Lordship, that 'nothing but the ordinary service of the day should be performed, and that no alterations should be made in the liturgy.' My persuasion is, that no serious disturbance will take place; still, however, it is necessary that every possible

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* This mild and paternal "shepherd and bishop" of the little rural parish of Ewelme, had just been obliged to take refuge in Oxford from the violence of his ungrateful parishioners — a plain proof how thoroughly the *virus* of disaffection had poisoned the land through its whole length and breadth.

precaution should be taken to prevent it. With this view, it appears desirable that a representation should be made, by your Lordship and the Chapter, to the Lord Mayor, expressing an earnest hope that his Lordship would adopt the most effectual measures to prevent any serious disturbance, at or near the Cathedral, on the occasion in question. * * * The necessary arrangements have also been made to afford the most effectual military support to the civil power in the metropolis, on Wednesday next, in case of necessity. * * * For the purpose of protecting the approaches to the Cathedral, barriers will be erected, and other measures of precaution taken to regulate and control the description and number of persons to be admitted into the church and churchyard. For the safety of the edifice, or for that of the persons who are to officiate, I beg your Lordship to be assured that I entertain no apprehension whatever."

The correspondence was then continued on this question, which was unanimously decided in the negative, whether, in case "application should be made for any *special return of thanks* on behalf of her Majesty," it should be permitted; and it terminated with an expression of satisfaction on the part of the Bishop that "this strange exhibition had gone off with less disgrace to the country than might have been expected; although, after all, it had been a mockery of religious solemnity at which every serious Christian must shudder."

During all these harassing duties nothing was more surprising than the persevering and indomitable spirit with which Lord Sidmouth encountered them. "As long," he observed to Mr. Loraine Smith on the 3d of December, "as the country gentlemen of England continue what they are, the disaffected will never succeed in exciting rebellion, or in effecting a revolution. With respect to what is passing, I can

and do make the greatest allowance for the feelings of the ignorant, but none at all for the conduct of those who are capable of judging. But, thank God, Great Britain is a good sea boat, and there never yet was a storm which she was unable to weather."

The "Life of Lord Eldon"* contains an intimation that the government did not weather this storm without encountering the usual result under perplexing circumstances; namely, difference of opinion amongst the crew. This appears to be confirmed by the two letters annexed, which Lord Sidmouth addressed to Mr. Bathurst on the 15th and 20th of December: — "The interval since I last wrote to you has been an unpleasant one. Liverpool went to Walmer in a very uneasy state of mind and spirits; and during his absence I had some painful communications at C—— H——. C—— followed him to Walmer, where he stayed three or four days, and on Saturday L—— returned. On Tuesday C—— circulated a draft of a letter from himself to the King, containing his resignation; and on Wednesday the letter was laid before his Majesty. I was immediately sent for to C—— H——. The King, however, I know, was not taken by surprise. * * * It is a most unfortunate circumstance, and involves us in very serious difficulties. He means to go abroad. It appears to me to be very doubtful, from the irritability at one great house, and the restlessness at a greater, whether the government will hold together. It is agreed to keep C——'s resignation

* Vol. ii. p. 398.

a secret, if possible, till some arrangements can be made in consequence of it. I am sick and tired, but I shall not shrink. This is my second *week* day at Richmond Park since the 12th of August, and I stay to clear off an arrear of letters, for I have no respite at my office."

Five days afterwards the subject was pursued as follows: — "I went to Fife House this morning, by appointment, and was grieved to learn that there was an insuperable difficulty in the way of Peel's becoming a member of the government at this time. What that difficulty is, it is not necessary now to state, but you will be glad to hear that it is only temporary. It is, however, agreed that it would not be advisable, under present circumstances, to knock at any other door; but to suspend the definite arrangement till the battle has been fought in the House of Commons, where 'cita mors aut victoria læta' assuredly awaits us. The point, therefore, to be now considered and decided is, how the vacancy at the India Board is to be filled up *ad interim;* and it is the opinion of Lords Liverpool and Castlereagh, and I confess it is my own, that the office of president should be associated, at present, with that of some person now a member of the cabinet; and with that view the only person who is looked to is yourself. I have stated your health, &c. &c., but in vain. * * * If our friends should not give us the support which we have now every reason to expect, in our resistance to any attempt to obtain a palace for the Queen, or to insert her name in the liturgy, the government must be changed. If we are supported, there will be no difficulty in making a satisfactory arrangement, which

Lord Liverpool promises shall take place with as little delay as possible." *

Lowering as were the clouds which overhung the conclusion of this anxious and harassing year, Lord Sidmouth considered them less portentous than those which had accompanied its progress; and this he expressed to two intimate friends in the following extracts, with which this eventful chapter will be brought to its termination. The first, dated Richmond Park, December 30th, was addressed to the Marquis of Hastings, then Governor General in India.

"I will not now enter upon matters of public concern; some of which will have excited in your mind the strongest feelings of indignation, grief, and shame.

'Pudet hæc opprobria nobis,
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.'

The prospect, however, is improving; and I have no doubt the storm will be weathered. Amidst numberless points of difficulty, there are some few upon which all are agreed; one of them is the wisdom and splendour of your Lordship's administration, and of the transcendant services which you have rendered, not to the East India Company only, but to your country. I ardently hope that your health may be long preserved, and that you may enjoy, in the highest degree, all the comforts of domestic life, and

* After much persuasion, and suggesting various objections, which were all overruled, Mr. Bathurst consented to the arrangement, on the understanding that he was not to receive the emoluments of the office, and was gazetted on the 13th of January, 1821. He was not, however, released from his unusual position until the 5th of February, 1822, when he was succeeded at the Board of Control by the Right Hon. Charles W. Williams Wynn.

all the gratification which can be derived from public gratitude, and from the consciousness of having deserved it."

The second was addressed on the following day to Lord Exmouth, in respect to whom the ties of family connexion were now superadded to those of ancient friendship.

"I have to thank you, my dear Lord, for three kind and welcome letters. * * * The King is improved in health and spirits, and you may rest assured he will be firmly supported by his government, which, however, cannot serve him usefully unless they are also firmly supported by parliament. We have taken our determination. The Queen will neither be harassed nor molested; but to a palace, and to the insertion of her name in the liturgy, we shall never consent; and if parliament should differ from us on those points, the government must fall. But the reports from our friends are extremely satisfactory. * * * Your friend, Sir Dennis Pack, called on Friday in Clifford Street. Perhaps I may succeed in endeavouring to induce him to give us a day at Richmond Park. We unite in cordial regards and good wishes to yourself, Lady Exmouth, and all your family. May the next year be fraught with happiness to you and yours, and may it be marked by the return of good-sense, right feelings, and true loyalty to our agitated and distempered country. In fair or foul weather, I shall remain, my dear Lord,

"Most truly yours,

"SIDMOUTH.

"To Admiral Viscount Exmouth, G. C. B."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1821.

Favourable Change in public Opinion respecting the Ministers. Correspondence with Sir Walter Scott. The Catholic Question — Letters of Dr. Adam Clarke and Dr. Rennell on that Subject. Lord Sidmouth's Speech on the Question. He meditates an early Retirement from Office — Accompanies the King to Ireland. His Correspondence from Dublin — Details the King's Proceedings to Lord Liverpool. Death of the Queen — Lord Liverpool to Lord Sidmouth on that Subject. Lord Liverpool to Lord Sidmouth, detailing the Circumstances of the Removal of the Queen's Remains on the 14th of August. Abstract of the military Proceedings on that Day. Lord Stowell to Lord Sidmouth. The King's Proceedings in Dublin. His valedictory Advice to his Irish Subjects. The King visits Germany. Lord Sidmouth one of the Lords Justices. Recommencement of Disturbances in Ireland.

At the close of the preceding year, that principle in the British constitution which pronounces the ministers responsible for actions not always in strictness their own, had operated most unfavourably for the existing government. The proceedings of parties, over whom they possessed no control, had compelled a resort to unpopular measures, their failure in which had excited amongst their opponents a lively expectation of their speedy overthrow. At this point, however, re-action ensued, and on the meeting of parliament on the 23d of January, 1821, ministers found to their astonishment, that their position, which they

imagined to be most precarious, was, in reality, secure. They had resolved to stake their existence on their refusal to introduce the Queen's name into the liturgy, and to provide her Majesty with a palace; and in the division upon Lord Tavistock's motion on the 6th of February, which embraced the whole question of their conduct towards the Queen, they were supported by the unusual majority of 146. This favourable change induced Lord Sidmouth to observe to Mr Bond, that "throughout the country the prospect was rather improving; he could not indeed say, 'concidunt venti;' but the weather was moderated, the wind was not so loud and violent, and our good old sea boat was likely to ride out the storm without any damage to her hull, and with very little to her sails and rigging." It was at this period that his Lordship found himself at leisure to cultivate the intimacy of Sir Walter Scott, then staying in London, from whom, on the 17th of February, he received the following note:—

"My dear Lord,

"I am truly grieved that an engagement with Mr. Coutts, on Saturday the 24th, prevents my having the honour to wait upon your Lordship at the White Lodge.

"I have a petition to present to your Lordship, which I presume to do in this manner. My only remaining brother —a man to whom nature has been highly bountiful and fortune much the contrary, and to whom, amongst others, Waverley and its whole cycle of novels have been ascribed— is sending home to my care his only son and my godson, whom I am very desirous, if I may so far presume on your Lordship's interest with the Commissioners of the Board of Control, should be sent out as a cadet for India in the next shipment of that commodity, which I suppose will take place this time next year. I shall then have had time to look after

imperfections in his very singular education; for his only instructor in classical knowledge has been his father, who has had to re-learn his forgotten Latin for the nonce. My godson's nurture, however, has been of a truly military character; for he was brought up in the mess-room of a Highland regiment, and finished his studies under the celebrated Colonel Norton, chief sachem of the Mohawks. I am informed Walter dances the war-dance and whoops the war-whoop to admiration.

"Seriously, and begging your Lordship's pardon for all this folly, I am truly anxious to secure some opening for this poor youth, who has nothing to trust to but what I can do for him. His father was one of the most active, fearless, and zealous loyalists I ever knew. I once saw him clear the theatre of half-a-dozen democrats as he would have turned out so many puppy dogs. Lord Advocate knew him well.

"I am going to Lord Montague's for two days. When I return, your Lordship will, perhaps, permit me the honour of waiting upon you. We have silenced the Scottish Whigs for our time, and, I think, drawn the flower of Scotland around the King and Constitution. Literally I do not exceed the mark, in the meeting where Lord Huntley (our cock of the north, as he is called,) presided over 800 gentlemen: there was influence and following enough among us to raise 50,000 men; property enough to equip and pay them for a year; young men — not unacquainted with arms — enough to discipline them; and one or two experienced generals to command them. I told this to my Whig friends, who were bullying me about the popular voice; and added, they might begin when they liked; we were as ready as they.

"I am always, my dear Lord, your obliged and faithful, humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT.*

"Waterloo Hotel, Jermyn Street, Saturday.

"I have news from Scotland, this morning, that I am a grandfather."

* The author was present when Lord Sidmouth received this letter, and well remembers his pointing out with approbation the delicate adroitness with which the writer had touched (as if acci-

Sir Walter Scott, during his present excursion, when asked by Lord Sidmouth how long he purposed to remain in the south, had answered "fifty pounds;" a period fortunately sufficient to enable his Lordship to enjoy his society at Richmond Park, and to submit to his inspection, as, we find from Sir Walter's diary, he again did on the 24th of May, 1828, some of the documents presented to the public in this work. On this occasion Lord Sidmouth invited a party of Scottish friends, who, he was aware, did not judge too severely of what he always denominated "that noble treason, of the 45" — including Lord Huntley, Lord Melville, Sir William Grant, &c. &c. — to meet their celebrated countryman; and the members of his Lordship's family still retain a vivid recollection of the shouting and dancing with which, when Lady Huntley sat down to the piano, they accompanied her Ladyship's feeling execution of their favourite national airs.

Sir Walter finally left London early in April, and on the evening of the 6th reached Manchester, from whence, whilst in a state "betwixt sleeping and waking," he addressed to the Hon. John Villiers,

dentally) upon all the topics; such as, "the cock of the north," a Highland regiment, the Indian chieftain, turning out the democrats, Scottish loyalty, &c. &c., which were best calculated to excite his Lordship's sympathies. It is scarcely necessary to add, that Lord Sidmouth's influence was successfully exerted with Mr. Bathurst, who then presided, gratuitously, over the Board of Control, and that when some preferable destination was afterwards found for the son of the putative father of the Waverley novels, the cadetship reserved for him was given to some other protégé of Sir Walter Scott. The grandson, whose birth Sir Walter, in the joy of his heart, could not help mentioning, was the lamented "Hugh Littlejohn," so well known to all youthful readers of Scottish history.

afterwards Earl of Clarendon, a paper of considerable length, on the subject of a projected "Royal Society of Literature," which he enclosed in the following letter * to Lord Sidmouth: —

"My dear Lord Sidmouth,

"This accompanies a letter for Mr. Villiers respecting a proposal of great peril which he made to me two days before I left London. I am sure your Lordship must have heard something of a society for pensioning a certain number of men of letters, giving prizes, &c. &c., which proceeds, as it appears to me, entirely upon a misconception of the world as it now is, and of the present state of literature. Mr. Villiers mentioned that his communication to me was confidential;

* It will shortly be seen that his Lordship caused a copy of this paper to be taken, which, after having been long mislaid, has been found amongst his papers; and as Sir Walter's able and talented biographer (see Life, vol. v. p. 57.) had expressed his inability to recover the document, it was in the first instance forwarded to that gentleman as more properly belonging to his work than to the present. Mr. Lockhart, however, having voluntarily relinquished the exclusive use of it, in observance of his obliging suggestions, it is introduced into the Appendix to this volume. Its recovery formed the subject of a communication, which Lord Sidmouth received in January, 1837, from Mr. Morritt of Rokeby, in which, after stating that Mr. Lockhart was preparing to publish the "Life" of Sir Walter Scott, and would, doubtless produce a "standard work containing as characteristic a portrait of Scott as we possess of Johnson," he alluded as follows to "this additional specimen of Scott's matchless versatility of power and wisdom:"—"I shall never forget that you showed me at the time the masterly letter which he sent you, many years ago, on the question of giving the royal name to the literary society. His advice was not acted upon; but the talent, wit, and admirable good sense which the letter contained, after such a journey, and with so little premeditation, displayed his power of mind and character perhaps more than any lighter essays that we have of his. * * *. I think you will enter into the delight which it gave me at the time, and if you can find it, pray, for the love we both of us bear to Scott's name and memory, let Mr. Lockhart add this admirable composition to the other remains of our lamented friend with which he has already been furnished."

but I am very desirous that my opinion on such a subject, *valeat quantum*, should pass through your Lordship's hands, as you are at once a friend to literature, and an excellent judge of the manner in which it may be best encouraged. For my own part, I was never so clear in an opinion in my life, as that the proposed attempt would be much worse than merely abortive. I may, however, be entirely wrong, and am open to conviction, and would, in that case, become a subscriber to the association; though I would beg to decline being a member of what is called the honorary class, to which, with its titles and duties, I feel a decided repugnance. When your Lordship has glanced your eye over the letter, will you have the goodness to seal it with a head, and send it to Mr. Villiers, without any intimation that it passed through your hand. I use this great freedom, because I am desirous that your Lordship should be in full possession of my sentiments, such as they are, upon a subject which, I am aware, will interest you particularly, and which, at the same time, is one of the very few cases in which long experience enables me to give an opinion with some degree of confidence. The thing is of great consequence; the more so, as Mr. Villiers hinted it had already gone too far for them to recede. In my opinion they had better recede, at all risks, than take the consequences of advancing. I am sincerely anxious about it, and shall be very sorry if my opinion should give pain either to Mr. Villiers, or the Bishop of St. David's, or any of the well-meaning supporters of the scheme. For his Majesty I need not say my devoted respect; but 'better service shall I never do him, than hindering this deed.' I have half thought of coming up to see the coronation, should it go on, and could your Lordship find some excuse for me to our Lord President, to whom a hint of your wish, on such a subject, would be a sufficient reason to give me leave of absence for ten days. My kindest and best respects attend the ladies; and I am always, my dear Lord, your Lordship's much obliged and faithful, humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"Manchester (now quiet and loyal).

"Friday, eleven at night; having travelled down without a moment's stop. This to serve as an apology for bad writing and inaccuracies of all sorts."

To this letter Lord Sidmouth replied on the 15th of April in the following terms: —

"* * * The project is justly liable to all the objections which you have stated, without the balance of a solitary recommendation in its favour. Sir William Scott first announced to me its birth, and we concurred in reprobating it in terms less weighty and forcible, though even more decided than your own. I then was informed of it, incidentally, by the Bishop of St. David's, its first parent, to whom I urged its immediate strangulation; but I was told that the exhortation came too late.† * * * I have taken a great and, perhaps, unwarrantable liberty — that of having your letter copied; but it was so by a confidential person. It shall not be shown without your permission, but I earnestly wish to be allowed to show it to the King. I am confident it would be well taken, and that the knowledge of your sentiments would have the best effect. Let me hear from you on this point at your earliest convenience. I will not fail to write to the Lord President, according to your desire.

"The best wishes and regards of all here constantly attend you. "Believe me, &c.

"SIDMOUTH."

Sir Walter's reply, which is published in the fifth volume of his life, expressed his consent to any use being made of his former letter, which would answer the purpose for which it was written; and his Lordship availed himself of this permission to show it to Mr. Morritt, who entirely coincided in "the masterly view of the subject which their mutual friend had taken."

At this period the House of Commons exhibited a

† As this society partakes of a charitable as well as a literary character, it will doubly gratify the benevolent reader to learn that, notwithstanding the sinister prognostics of so many eminent objectors, it still flourishes.

new feature, which was considered ominous of the approaching concession of the Catholic claims. On the 28th of February Mr. Plunkett's motion for a committee on those claims was carried by a majority of 6, and on the 2d of April a bill for the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities passed that branch of the legislature by a majority of 19. The House of Lords, therefore, now became the battle field of a cause of which Lord Sidmouth had long been regarded one of the principal champions. Amongst the letters, which, under the alarm consequent on this threatened innovation, many serious and reflecting persons addressed to his Lordship, is one from the pen of Doctor Adam Clarke, which supplies the following extracts: — "Some time ago I had the honour to inform your Lordship that I had made some most important selections from the records of the kingdom relative to the Catholic question. These having been made under the record commission, at the head of which your Lordship stands, I shall feel it my duty to intrust to your Lordship, that should the matter come before the Lords, you may be able to show from unimpeachable evidence the danger of conceding what is now claimed, as well as the absolute falsity of some of the main positions held by the foreign universities, in their answers to Mr. Pitt. Many who are from principle and conscience attached most warmly to the civil and religious establishments of the country, are greatly distressed to find his Majesty's ministers divided on a subject of such vast importance to the Protestant interest, and the cause of civil liberty. Much hope, however, is reposed in your Lordship's exertions and influence, whose strong

attachment to the Protestant faith is so well known. Your Lordship may rest assured that a great majority of his Majesty's subjects are hostile to the proposed innovations on the religious and civil constitution of the country; and contemplate the concession of the claims now made by the Catholics, with the deepest apprehension and alarm. I am truly sorry that any good men should be found advocates for this measure, which has for its supporters not only the Catholics, but all the disaffected in the land. No unfriendly feeling to any class of the community dictates what I now write. I wish the Catholics all the religious and civil liberty they can enjoy; but I should justly render suspected my pretensions to the character of a Briton and a Protestant, if I wished to have confided to them *a legislative authority*, which their principles would oblige them to use for the suppression of *heresy*, that is in their language *protestantism*, and the establishment of the Papal faith and influence over the British dominions. We feel, my good Lord, for the Protestant cause, and for the safety, honour, and welfare, of our sovereign and his dominions." Lord Sidmouth in his reply, readily accepted the loan of the learned Doctor's selections, and assured him, that "he entirely concurred in all the sentiments which he had expressed on the Roman Catholic question."

Another letter on the same subject, which Lord Sidmouth received on the 20th of March, from Dr. Rennell, the learned Master of the Temple, has afforded the extracts inserted below.

"Knowing the deep interest your Lordship takes in the question, I cannot but express my regret at the

unexpected success the Roman Catholic claims have met with in the House of Commons. One thing strikes me as extraordinary: that the opposers of this destructive measure have not alluded to the revival of the order of the Jesuits, and the establishment of two seminaries; one in Lancashire, and the other at Castlebar in Ireland; upon the most extended scale; each containing a school and university, and receiving each 1200 students and scholars, nearly equalling in number our two universities and public schools. If, therefore, Mr. Plunkett's bills pass, this kingdom will admit into power and jurisdiction, not only Popery, but the very worst kind of it — *Jesuitical Popery*; for wherever the Jesuits are permitted to establish themselves, from the superiority of their talents, *Catholic education* will always be monopolised by them. Surely this Protestant nation cannot admit to places and functions of vital importance the scholars and disciples of a set of men who have been driven even from every Catholic country, as the "hostes humani generis," and whom the Emperor Alexander, about a year ago, expelled from Russia, as the incorrigible perverters of civil and social order. This was done in an edict of which I have a copy."

The bills were debated in the House of Lords on the 16th and 17th of April; and there appeared, on the division, a majority of 39 against the second reading; the numbers being: "Contents, 120; non-contents, 159." The most remarkable speech of the debate was that delivered by the Lord Chancellor, who resorted, on this occasion, to a step very unusual with him, namely, publishing it. Lord Sidmouth spoke on the second evening, immediately after Lord

Grenville; and as his speech expresses some of his principal objections to the measure in a clear and forcible manner, a brief analysis of it will here be subjoined.

His Lordship observed, that "he objected to the first part of the bill, not on the ground of individual distrust of the Roman Catholics, but because of the nature of the tenets and principles inherent in their religion, which he considered hostile to civil and religious liberty. Many of its obnoxious tenets, indeed, had been abandoned by its professors; but many also, particularly the doctrines of exclusive salvation and infallibility, still remained. The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin had distinctly stated, in a circular letter, that the Church of Rome was infallible in its decisions, not only in points of faith, but also of morality. The same doctrines were embodied in the resolutions of the Roman Catholic clergy of Drogheda, and of the Professors of Maynooth. The effect of the bill must be to give spiritual authority to the head of the Roman Catholic Church, although the constitution had declared that no foreign influence should exist in this country.

"In reference to the second branch of the bill, his Lordship believed that the securities therein suggested were insufficient. As regarded the oath proposed to be substituted for that which now existed, he maintained that it could not be subscribed consistently with the principles of the Roman Catholic religion. His Lordship knew that this opinion was entertained by many most respectable individuals of that persuasion. There had been both general and district meetings of Roman Catholic ecclesiastics of

Ireland, at all of which, resolutions, embracing also a petition to parliament, were unanimously passed against the clauses in the second part of the bill. No measure had ever been submitted to parliament more calculated to disunite the various classes of the community than the present. It had not only widened the division between the Protestants and the Catholics, but had introduced disunion amongst the Catholics themselves."

Two days after the division, Lord Sidmouth received the following note from Sir William Scott:— "I congratulate you most heartily, my dear Lord, on your victory, ably and honourably obtained. I hope it will give a better tone of thinking to another house, where, with few exceptions, we have the strength of government against us. The matter has now been carefully and gravely considered in your House at least, and I hope the Catholics will acquiesce in it for a fair length of time. I wish we may be able to say, with the sacred historian, 'and the land had rest forty years.' * * * The general feeling here was anti-Catholic. Our Roman Catholic neighbours were very averse to the bill: W—— and his chaplain decidedly so. The latter declared to me his resolution to leave the kingdom if it passed, rather than take the security oaths."

On the 5th of May, in this year, the once formidable enemy of the British name and independence closed his most eventful and extraordinary career at St. Helena; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that so little interest was now excited by the heretofore dreaded name of Napoleon, that his death is not once alluded to in the correspondence of the period.

Upon another topic, however, namely, his approaching retirement from office, Lord Sidmouth now expressed himself freely and openly to his friends. The earliest intimation of such an intention is found in a letter which his Lordship addressed three years before the present date to Lord Exmouth*, who combated the idea by "requesting him to remember that his country had claims upon him; that he was considered, among loyal and honest men, the main prop of the government; and that his retirement would, too probably, be the signal for the breaking up of the party."

In May, 1820, Lord Sidmouth renewed the subject to the same friend in the following terms: — "It has been a sense of honour and duty solely, which, for a considerable time past, has kept me in my present official situation; and I indulge the hope of being, ere long, released from that obligation, by a happy change in the internal state of the country."† On this point his Lordship expressed himself still more decidedly on the 1st of May, 1821, when writing to Earl Talbot, then Viceroy of Ireland, who had declared to him "the unfeigned regret with which he had heard

* "There is a friend of yours who would gladly exchange thraldom for liberty, whenever it could be done with satisfaction to others and with honour to himself."

† About the same time he made a similar intimation, accompanied by an opinion that his existence would not be much prolonged, to the author of this Life; and when the latter ventured to express a dissent, he replied in the words of the beautiful old ballad —

"I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which bids me not to stay:
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away."

of his determination to resign the duties of that official situation, in which his firm, yet mild, administration of the laws had so often been instrumental in saving the country from the many and appalling dangers with which it was threatened."

To these friendly expressions Lord Sidmouth replied, that "the time appeared to him to have arrived, when, consistently with public duty and honour, he might retire from public life. There are persons," he added, "from whom it will be painful to me to be separated, and allow me to say that your Lordship is one of them. But although the connexion of office will have ceased, that of mutual regard and friendship will, I trust, survive, and remain unimpaired."

Whilst his Lordship was meditating this step, Lord Exmouth and other private friends united in an opinion—the grounds of which were explained by Mr. Henry Hobhouse in the subjoined extract—that he ought on no account to retire from the government, but only to exchange his present office for one of a less laborious character:—"I am actuated by no selfish motive, and it is solely on public grounds that I beseech you to reconsider your wish to leave the administration. The continuance of the present ministry is of the greatest importance to the well-being of the crown, the church, and the state, and I am convinced that its stability is greatly augmented by your being one of its members. Hence it is highly important, that, at all events, you should retain a seat in the cabinet; and I trust, therefore, that you will declare to the King your wish, not to be relieved from public business, but to be less burdened with it."

Desirous, however, as Lord Sidmouth now was of

repose, he had still some severe labours to undergo, before any harbour of refuge could be entered. The coronation of King George IV., which was celebrated on the 19th of July, so entirely absorbed his attention, that during the tedious preparations for that ceremonial, he appears scarcely to have despatched a single private letter. On the 31st of July his Majesty set out, by sea, on his long-meditated visit to Ireland, and was followed, two days afterwards, by Lord Sidmouth, whose onerous duty it was to accompany the King to that country as his chief confidential adviser; Lord Liverpool remaining in town to attend to any exigencies that might arise. Scarcely had his Majesty departed, when the Queen was attacked by an inflammatory disorder, which terminated in her death, on the night of the 7th of August. Intelligence of this event found Lord Sidmouth at Dublin, awaiting the arrival of the King. His Lordship immediately proceeded in a steamer across the Channel, to Holyhead, where the royal squadron was detained by contrary winds; and after receiving his Majesty's commands, returned on the same day to Dublin. The King arrived at the Phœnix Park on the evening of the 12th of August, and remained there in seclusion until after the removal of the Queen's remains to Harwich. But, probably, a few extracts from the correspondence will serve to make these proceedings more intelligible. The first will be selected from the letter in which his Lordship announced to Mr. Bathurst his arrival in Dublin on the 6th of August: —

"Dublin Castle, August 7th.

"I arrived here yesterday after a prosperous and pleasant journey and voyage: from Wynnstay, in particular, where I

slept on Friday night, the former was most delightful. The new road, excellent in itself, intersected a magnificent country, totally unlike any that I had ever before seen. On Sunday, after attending divine service in the Cathedral, I went from Bangor by water to Caernarvon, for which I was well rewarded by the Castle; then dined at Plaas Newydd, from whence we proceeded to Holyhead; and yesterday morning we embarked in the steam packet, and, with wind and tide against us, completed the passage in seven hours."

The next extract has been taken from a letter which his Lordship addressed, on the 12th of August, to his eldest daughter: —

"We passed several days in a state of anxious suspense; and the event by which it was terminated fully warrants the observations which you applied to it. It is a most awful occurrence, and appears to me to be felt as could be wished. But 'even from the tomb the voice of' faction will cry; and the lifeless remains will be made, if possible, the instrument of irritation; but the general feeling is correct. The King will land privately this evening, and remain quiet at the Lodge till the time has elapsed, within which, if it took place in England, the funeral would be over."

In his despatch of the same day Lord Sidmouth told Mr. Hobhouse, that "he would not trouble him with a detail which would answer no purpose, of difficulties and vexations which he had to deal with; but he endeavoured to reconcile himself to the service in which he was engaged, by the hope and belief that he may be of use."

His Lordship pointed out some of the objects which now occupied his attention in the following letter to Lord Liverpool, dated August 11th: — "His Majesty's public entry into Dublin will probably take place on Wednesday or Thursday next. He will

then proceed to the Castle, and hold a private levee: of his public levee, some days' previous notice will be given, as he will there receive those addresses which are not to be presented to him on the throne or in the closet. I shall advise that all gaieties and festivities shall be postponed until the ceremonies of gratulation are over. The address from the archbishops, bishops, and the clergy of the Established Church, and the addresses from the Lord Mayor and Corporation of Dublin, and from the University, will be presented to his Majesty on the throne; those from the Presbyterian dissenters, the Roman Catholic bishops, and the Quakers, will be presented in the closet."

Whilst his Lordship was thus anxiously occupied in Dublin, Lord Liverpool, who supplied his place at the Home Office, was beset by still more painful and perplexing duties; for, unfortunately, Lord Sidmouth was too true a prophet when he predicted that "the lifeless remains," instead of being permitted to descend to the grave in peace, would still "be made," by the factious, "the instrument of irritation." The means by which this purpose was effected are circumstantially related in Lord Liverpool's private letters to Lord Sidmouth; but although the transaction must one day occupy a cheerless and degrading page in British history, it is of too recent a date to be at present very minutely detailed. Only those parts of the correspondence, therefore, will here be inserted which tend to justify the proceedings of ministers, and to show their anxiety, in accordance with the expressed wishes of the deceased Queen, to conduct the scene to its close with the least possible delay, and in the

most becoming and peaceable manner. The letters which have been considered most conducive to the above-mentioned purpose are the two following:—

"My dear Lord, Fife House, 8th, August, 1821.

"I think it right to send you a copy of the letter which I had the honour of addressing to the King upon receiving intelligence of her Majesty's death. I have since seen Dr. Lushington, who has communicated to me a copy of the Queen's will, with the codicils annexed to it, and I shall send them by the same conveyance to the King.

"We are fortunately relieved from any difficulty about the funeral, as her Majesty has directed that she shall be buried at Brunswick, and that the body shall be sent off within three days, if possible, after her decease.

"The inscription which the Queen has directed to be placed upon her coffin cannot obviously be put on by any authority or consent of government, nor be permitted whilst the coffin is in the possession of the officers of government. What her Majesty's executors may do afterwards, it is not our business to inquire." * * *

Lord Liverpool's next letter describes the circumstances of the removal of the Queen's remains from Hammersmith — an object which, from various causes, could not be effected until the 14th of August, *seven* days, instead of *three*, after her Majesty's decease:—

"My dear Lord, Fife House, 15th of August, 1821.

"I am sorry to be obliged to inform you, that the proceedings of yesterday passed off in a very unsatisfactory manner. No orders could be more precise than those given, and the officers of the Lord Chamberlain's department acted with becoming spirit and firmness. It was evident, however, that preparations had been made with a view of defeating the purpose of carrying the royal remains by the New Road, and

thereby to force them through the city.* These, however, might all have been defeated without much difficulty, and, certainly, without any loss of lives, by decision and proper spirit on the part of the magistrate. I first heard that the progress of the funeral had been arrested at Kensington, between 9 and 10 o'clock. An officer belonging to the escort brought the report. I found there was no magistrate with the escort, and I sent over for Sir Robert Baker, and directed him to accompany the officer, and not leave the funeral till complete effect had been given to the intentions of government. It was intended that the funeral should move into Hyde Park by the Kensington Gate. I have the authority of the officers to say that this might have been easily effected; but Sir Robert Baker declined taking this course, and they moved on to Hyde-Park Corner. There the funeral was detained half an hour, whilst Sir Robert sent to Whitehall for further orders. We directed him again to go through the Park. This was accomplished without difficulty; but, owing in a great measure to the delay which had been occasioned by sending for orders, an immense concourse was assembled near Cumberland Gate†; and there a conflict took place which has, unfortunately, led to the loss of some lives: I hope not more than one or two. The funeral then proceeded without obstruction till they came to Tottenham Court Road. They were there met by another mob, and measures had been taken to obstruct the progress by the direct road. The officers here again were of opinion that the obstructions might have been removed; but, at all events, the funeral might have gone by the Hampstead Road, where there were no obstructions whatever, and thus have got into the Essex Road by a very short *détour*.

* The Under-Secretary stated to Lord Sidmouth that "immense assiduity had been used by the Radicals for that purpose. Lord Liverpool," he added, "has been very firm, but unfortunately his directions have not been obeyed."

† It will be seen that at this point the circumstances did not occur precisely as his Lordship has described. It was here that the magistrate dispensed with the "support" of Life Guards; and from that time "he continued to dismiss all the detachments of horse and foot which successively arrived, to enable the procession to resume its original route."—*Letter of Under-Secretary of State.*

"Sir Robert Baker, on his own responsibility, however, thought proper here to give way, and conducted the funeral to Temple Bar. After this was done, the mob displayed no symptoms of violence, though the concourse which attended the procession was considerable, till the funeral had passed Mile End. In addition to all other objections which presented themselves to the funeral going through the city, we seriously entertained an apprehension, that, after the protest entered by the executors in the morning*, an attempt might be made and sanctioned by the city magistrates for detaining the royal corpse within the city, and we were all of opinion that the military escort would not be suffered to attend it. In both these respects, however, we were agreeably disappointed; for no objection was made to the military escort entering the city; and the only additional circumstance was the Lord Mayor, Aldermen Wood and Waithman, and a few of the Common Council joining the procession.

"I send you, enclosed, copies of the whole of the cor-

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* In this document the executors complained most strangely, considering the positive injunction contained in the will, of the "*precipitate*" removal of the Queen's remains from Brandenburg House, before due preparation had, in their judgment, been made for its conveyance to its ultimate destination, and "protested" against such removal as an exercise of power, on the part of the government, in violation of their rights as executors. Lord Liverpool stated in reply, "that it was the undoubted right and prerogative of his Majesty to direct and regulate the funeral ceremonies of the Queen." He also reminded the executors that, in this case, "the expenses of the funeral were, at their application, to be borne by the King;" and he stated, in conclusion, that "it had been the object of the King's government, notwithstanding all the opposition they had encountered, to conform to her late Majesty's intentions as stated in the will, by removing her Majesty's remains from this country with as little delay as possible, and as privately as a due respect to her Majesty's exalted station would permit." The minister's anxiety to avoid delay was, on every account, highly praiseworthy. It must have been obvious, indeed, to the meanest capacity, that the only possible result of further delay could be to keep alive a dangerous excitement, and to afford the factious further opportunities of perfecting their preparations in daring resistance of the King's authority.

respondence which has passed between the executors and myself, for his Majesty's information. Nothing can be more abominable than their conduct; but it has been of incalculable advantage to us, that the Queen, by her will, fixed the place of her interment, and even the time at which she wished her remains to be removed. This has placed us upon a rock as to argument; for, in fact, *we* have been carrying into execution her intentions, whilst *her executors* have, for popular purposes, been taking every measure to counteract them. Hobhouse will, of course, send you many further particulars; but I thought the King would be desirous that you should have a report from me, with the view I entertain of all that has passed. I was anxious that the body should have been removed by water, but it was quite clear that we could not have ventured to carry it through London Bridge; and if it had been embarked either at Woolwich or Deptford, you might have had scenes of a similar nature, besides other inconveniences which Lord Melville will have explained. I was most happy to hear of his Majesty's safe arrival in Ireland. Have the goodness to thank Londonderry for me for his letters, and say I do not write to him as I have so much upon my hands, and as I consider this as a letter in common to you both.

"Believe me to be, my dear Lord, yours very sincerely,

"LIVERPOOL."

It appears that when intelligence of the first interruption of the procession, between Hammersmith and Kensington, reached the government, a reinforcement of Life Guards was immediately despatched in support of the escort; and it is from the report of the proceedings of those troops that the following particulars, explanatory of Lord Liverpool's statement, have been extracted: — The detachment, passing through the Park, reached the Kensington Gate, on one side, at the same time that the procession arrived at the other; and there it was first brought into collision with the mob, which had closed the

gates, and endeavoured, by volleys of stones and brick-bats, to prevent the soldiers from forcing them. This, however, was soon accomplished; and then Sir Robert Baker, who, by that time, had joined the procession, was in vain urged to return with it through Kensington, and thus regain the route from which it had been diverted. Three other suggestions — to enter the Park at the Kensington Gate, or through the Knightsbridge Barracks, or at Hyde Park Corner — were next pressed upon him, but all without success. At the last-mentioned point the entrance into the Park was found systematically barricadoed by several waggons, laden with bricks, &c. &c., from which the horses had been purposely removed.* And here, whilst the magistrate and the head of the escort proceeded along Piccadilly, the Life Guards, who followed in support, dismounting from their horses, removed the waggons, forced the gates, and turned the procession into the Park before Sir Robert Baker and those in front were aware of the circumstance. At the Cumberland entrance the iron gates were found to have been closed by the mob, and a very deter-

* The two points most strongly barricadoed were the gates leading into the Park from Piccadilly, and the entrance into the Edgeware Road from Oxford Street. Surely these impediments, by which the principal avenues — not upon the prescribed line of the procession, but upon that which it must necessarily have taken after first being diverted from its course at Kensington — were previously blocked up, indicate rather a preconcerted and organised plan of resistance to the King's authority by parties above the lowest orders, than a casual collision between the troops and the mob. If so — considering the solemn occasion, the awful risk of life which must have resulted from any disturbance in the streets of London, and the testamentary instructions of the deceased herself — such conduct was most discreditable to the parties concerned. It did make two families orphans: it might have made hundreds.

mined resistance was there encountered. The passage, however, was effected without the slightest injury to any individual of the rioters—although the soldiers suffered considerably—and the procession was safely established in Oxford Street. They here awaited the arrival of the magistrate; and whilst in this position, with Tyburn Gate blocked up with a large waggon, laden with bricks, in front, and the Edgeware Road, obstructed by several others, on their right, so violent an attack was made upon them that it became absolutely necessary to repel it by force. The mob was quickly routed, but unfortunately not before two of the ringleaders had received wounds which subsequently proved fatal. At this moment the magistrate regained the lost procession; and, conceiving that the presence of the detachment of Life Guards, whose services we are tracing, was no longer required, prevailed on the commanding officer to dismiss them to their quarters.

The impression which this disrespectful resistance of the royal authority made upon sober and reflecting minds may be gathered from the sentiments which Lord Stowell addressed to Lord Sidmouth on the occasion. They are contained in a communication received from the former noble Lord whilst he was on a visit to Edinburgh; and as the letter of such a man from such a place will probably be deemed interesting, the whole document will be inserted, although the postscript alone is relevant to the present subject:—

"My dear Lord, Edinburgh, August 31st, 1821.

"As you were so kind as to express a wish of hearing from me whilst at Edinburgh, I venture to break in for a few

minutes upon your royal festivities. I am sure I need not assure you that I receive the highest gratification from reading the accounts of the hearty and dutiful affection with which the King is welcomed in Ireland. Their loyalty runs, as it ought to do, mountains high; and I think his Majesty must be deeply penetrated with the lively demonstrations of it that pour in upon him from all quarters. I have great satisfaction in assuring you, that his reception in this most beautiful city, the seat of his ancestors, will not be less gratifying to him, fair allowance being made for the graver and more saturnine cast of disposition and manners that belong generally to the temper and behaviour of this people. Some of their leading lawyers, and some of their university metaphysicians, may carry their politics to the length of ultra-Whiggism. But such is not the prevailing sentiment of the people; and the more immediate representatives of the Stuart family having quitted the world, they are extremely well disposed to transfer the whole of their affection to his Majesty as the genuine descendant of that line. Glasgow and the neighbourhood continue, as they have in all times of their own monarchy been, factious and republican. The disaffection which has appeared there has been falsely attributed to Irish settlers, who are very numerous; for it is the genuine growth of the old covenanting spirit that always governed the minds of the native Scotch of that district. The military commander assures me that not a single Irishman has been found involved in their recent plots and conspiracies. It was all pure, unadulterated Scotch spirit of that poisonous kind; but it is confined to that district. A good cavalier spirit, of the true Montrose and Dundee kind, prevails elsewhere.

"We traversed the Castle yesterday, and Holyrood House, in company with Sir Thomas Bradford, who married a first cousin of mine. I was much gratified with the sight of the room in which James I., the immediate ancestor of his Majesty, was born, and which contains affecting memorials of that event; and likewise of the crown and other regalia lately discovered in a neighbouring apartment, to the unspeakable joy of the nation. In the Court of Claims, we wished much to have them up to London, to be borne at the Coronation by the Scotch nobility who were entitled to carry them; but the

Scotch Commissioners would not hear of it. We offered the best Scotch security for their safe return, and that they should remain in Scotch custody the whole time; but all to no purpose.

"We adjourned from the Castle to the Palace of Holyrood House—a most interesting scene, and rendered most strikingly affecting by various memorials of its connexion with the history of the ill-fated Mary. We could not traverse the apartments without mournful sensations, excited by many appearances that presented themselves to our sight and recollections. The ruin of the elegant chapel, and the general state, not of absolute decay, but of something approaching to desolation, in which the palace now exists, impress rather a gloomy turn of thinking. But we had the pleasure of hearing, that, when his Majesty visits Scotland, it shall be rendered worthy of his presence. I should hope, however, that ancient vestiges, connected with history, will preserve their station. His own taste will be gratified by the sight of them. To-day we are going to see the College, the Museum, the Advocate's Library, &c. &c. We find many friends here, and spend our time agreeably, and not without a very sufficient measure of hospitality. I am, &c. &c.

"STOWELL.

"P. S. Let me add a few words on the sad transaction that took place in London the day before I left it—I mean the victory of the mob over the military, however occasioned. Your Lordship may be assured that you are not blamed in the least; for the universal remark from every mouth is, that, if Lord Sidmouth had been there, no such disgraceful scene would have happened. Important duties, however, compelled your absence. * * *. I don't wonder that every well-affected man every where, both in London and here, should contemplate such events with the deepest affliction. * * * The censure of public opinion falls heavily upon the magistrate; I don't know how justly, in the present unexplained and unauthenticated state of the matter. An authentic account will, doubtless, be expected; and if it shall then appear that he assumed, without authority, and from motives either of fear or false prudence, to deviate grossly from his instructions, a severe responsibility will follow; for

it is not a slight matter that the public safety has been so seriously endangered. We all feel that, in the present times, the safety of the country depends much upon the superiority of the army, governed by civil authority, over the force of the heated and disaffected multitude in the capital; and if that is suffered to be overruled, it shakes every man's idea of his own personal safety. * * * I met the mob that day in Holborn; and they hollowed out to me, 'Ay! you gemmen thought you could carry every thing your own way; but we'll show you the difference:' and they *will* show it if this victory of the mob is suffered to pass over unnoticed. It is not the last victory that they will obtain."

The royal remains were embarked on board the Glasgow frigate, at Harwich, on the 16th of August, according to Lord Liverpool's original intention, having rested at Chelmsford, thirty miles distant from London, on the first night, and at Colchester, being an advance of twenty miles, on the second. Lord Sidmouth received intelligence of the proceedings on the 14th with deep regret, as he dreaded, with Lord Stowell, the moral effect which might be produced by them.* He therefore considered it essential that the King should vindicate his authority, by inflicting some permanent mark of his royal displeasure on those who might be found to have neglected their duty on the

* Happily these apprehensions were groundless; and the only evil result reported was, that "Watson and Co., had been resuscitated by the events of the 14th, and were now busied in getting up a public funeral for the two men who were shot at Cumberland Gate." It may be mentioned here, that the grounds pleaded by the executors for further delay, namely, that the necessary preparations would not have been made on the Continent for forwarding the royal remains, were proved by the result wholly unfounded; for the procession, which only arrived at Stade on Monday the 20th of August, was enabled to move towards Brunswick on the following morning.

occasion, or to have taken a prominent part in those very discreditable proceedings. This step, however, was postponed until his Majesty's return to England; and in the mean time, as Lord Sidmouth reported to Lord Liverpool, "every thing went on in Dublin most satisfactorily. Not a single unpleasant circumstance had occurred. The plans for each day, to the 30th inclusive, were settled; and on the 31st his Majesty intended to re-embark for England. On the 28th there was to be an installation of additional knights of St. Patrick, in which number it was intended, after full consideration, to include the Earl of Fingall; a measure which would be gratifying to the Catholics, and be productive," his Lordship was satisfied, "of the very best effect." "Every thing," he informed his eldest daughter on the 22d, "has proceeded most prosperously. The public entry, the review, the attendance at the Cathedral, have all taken place in the manner best calculated to make a powerful and lasting impression. I never saw such enthusiasm, or such orderly demeanour; the combination of both, which I have witnessed here, is, I believe, unexampled. I was lazy last night, and did not attend the drawing-room, and this evening I shall escape the play: then my escapes will cease, as Lord Londonderry, whose company has been delightful to me, will depart on Friday."

On the 27th of August his Lordship informed Lord Liverpool, that "the King had postponed his departure from Dublin till the 4th of September," and at the same time expressed his own intention of being in town on the 11th. "All the cabinet," he added, "should be assembled whilst his Majesty is in town.

We shall have enough upon our hands, and difficulties to meet, not inferior, as far as the government is concerned, to any which we have yet encountered. There can be no doubt that the conduct of those who obstructed the course of the funeral on the 14th was an offence in the view of the law; * * * and unless government becomes an accuser, I am convinced it will suffer severely in estimation and character."

"The tables," as his Lordship expressed himself on the same day to another correspondent, "must be turned, and we must become the accusers of the complainants, instead of suffering the complainants to be the only accusers."

From the departure of Lord Londonderry until the King's embarkation on the 5th of September, Lord Sidmouth was the only cabinet minister in attendance upon his Majesty, and it was generally admitted that he executed the very difficult and responsible duties, which thus devolved upon him, with extraordinary temper, judgment, and ability.*

The enthusiastic loyalty with which the sovereign was every where welcomed, induced his Lordship to hope that some permanent benefits might result from

* Extract of a note from Lord Wellesley, dated October 4th:— "Blake desired me to thank you in the warmest terms for your kindness and favour in Ireland. He further acquainted me (and he is no flatterer), that you had left the most favourable impression in that country, and that you had obtained the esteem and respect of all parties. He particularly mentioned that Plunkett had spoken of you with the strongest expressions of satisfaction and high estimation." This appears a favourable occasion for stating, that although Lord Sidmouth once declined the Lord Lieutenancy, he always felt a disposition to hold that office. "He was satisfied," he said, "that it was possible to make determined resistance to the Roman Catholic claims perfectly consistent with kindness and conciliation."

the royal visit: that at all events the experiment was worth trying; and consequently he obtained permission to introduce into the subjoined letter of royal valediction which his Majesty, on leaving the Irish shore, commanded him to address to the people of Ireland through the Lord Lieutenant, a few affectionate words of advice and admonition.

To His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

"My Lord, Dublin Castle, Sept. 3d, 1821.

"The time of the King's departure from Ireland being arrived, I am commanded by his Majesty to express his entire approbation of the manner in which all persons acting in civil and military situations, in the city of Dublin and its neighbourhood, have performed their several duties during the period of his Majesty's residence in this part of the kingdom.

"His Majesty is pleased to consider, that to your Excellency his acknowledgments are particularly due: he is conscious how much he owes to your Excellency's attentions and arrangements; and his Majesty gladly avails himself of this occasion of declaring the high sense which he entertains of the ability, temper, and firmness with which your Excellency has uniformly administered the great trust which he has placed in your hands.

"I am further commanded to state, that the testimonies of dutiful and affectionate attachment, which his Majesty has received from all classes and descriptions of his Irish subjects, have made the deepest impression on his mind; and that he looks forward to the period when he shall revisit them with the strongest feelings of satisfaction. His Majesty trusts that, in the mean time, not only the spirit of loyal union, which now so generally exists, will remain unabated and unimpaired, but that every cause of irritation will be avoided and discountenanced, mutual forbearance and good-will observed and encouraged, and security be thus afforded for the continuance of that concord amongst themselves which is not less essential to his Majesty's happiness than to their own,

and which it has been the chief object of his Majesty, during his residence in this country, to cherish and promote.

"His Majesty well knows the generosity and warmth of heart which distinguish the character of his faithful people of Ireland; and he leaves them with a heart full of affection towards them, and with the confident and gratifying persuasion that this parting admonition and injunction of their sovereign will not be given in vain.

"I have the honour to be, with great truth and regard, my Lord, your Excellency's most obedient and faithful servant,

"SIDMOUTH."

On the 11th of September, three days previous to the King's arrival in London, a cabinet council was held, at which it was decided to recommend to his Majesty the removal of Sir Robert Wilson, who had taken a prominent part in the proceedings on the 14th of August, from his rank in the army, and that of Sir Robert Baker from his situation in the police. "The determination as to the latter," Lord Sidmouth remarked to Mr. Bathurst, "was very painful to him." On the 25th of September his Majesty proceeded on a visit to his Hanoverian dominions, having delegated the royal authority during his absence to certain commissioners or lords justices, in the number of whom Lord Sidmouth, as Secretary of State, was necessarily included. Of these the presence of three was required on all important occasions to constitute a board, in consequence of which an arrangement was made, to which his Lordship alluded in the following expressions addressed to Mr. Bathurst on the 24th:—"It is calculated that two months will be passed by his Majesty on the Continent, and that period of service is to be divided between Lord Maryborough, Robinson, and you, according to some agreement

amongst yourselves. The convenience of the Duke of Montrose and the Marquesses of Winchester and Cholmondeley, is to be similarly taxed; but the principal burden (as has not been unusual) will fall upon me. * * * The King left town this morning, and I have no doubt that our friend Sir William Curtis is now the happiest of the happy, with his royal guest, who was to dine and sleep under his roof at Ramsgate. I took leave of his Majesty yesterday at Carlton House. He was very gracious. * * * In the course of this week he will visit the field of Waterloo with the Duke of Wellington."*

The period of the King's return from Hanover was somewhat accelerated, and he arrived in town on the 10th of November. When his Majesty left England there existed "an uncomfortable state of feeling between himself and his prime minister, which time and reflection had now happily removed."† Lord Sidmouth alluded to this circumstance in several letters to Mr. Bathurst, especially in the following extract, which was indited on the 11th of November:

* Extract from a letter from Lord Clancarty to Lord Sidmouth, dated Brussels, October 1st, 1821: —

"I avail myself of the departure of the Duke of Wellington to acquaint your Lordship that our royal master left this residence this morning; that, in addition to his suite, the Duke of Wellington and I had the honour of accompanying his Majesty to Sombref, and on the way thither, over the fields of Waterloo, Quatre Bras, and Ligny."

† The following extract from a note which Lord Sidmouth addressed to Lord Liverpool on the 9th of December induces a conjecture that an intended creation of baronets was one of the causes of this state of things: —

"The King is very anxious upon the subject of the creations. This I learnt yesterday from Sir Benjamin Bloomfield, and really the matter is not worth a gale of wind, much less a storm."

—"I must give you the satisfaction of knowing that the King and his minister are arrived in town, each in a frame of mind that affords a fair prospect of accommodation at present, and of a good understanding in future. Their first meeting may perhaps take place to-morrow. The approximation has been chiefly produced by Lord Londonderry."

During the principal period of the King's absence on the Continent, Lord Sidmouth gave his daily attendance at his office in town, from whence, on the 16th of October, he addressed to Lord Londonderry the following report of the state of domestic affairs: —"At home every thing goes on well, with the exception of some agitation in the county of Limerick; but a letter received to-day from the Lord Lieutenant encourages me to hope that it will soon be suppressed. I have endeavoured, and I trust not unsuccessfully, to prevent any mischievous impression being made by the renewal, though in mutilated terms, of a certain party toast, at a public dinner in Dublin. The temper of the City of London is improved and improving. Sir William Curtis* dined here last week; he declares his Majesty's gracious visit has restored his health. The last report of the revenue is a subject of general gratulation. Vansittart's crest is elevated, and I trust that the popularity of perilous and merciless retrenchments will now decline."

Two days afterwards his Lordship wrote in the

* The present being the last allusion that will be made to this upright and manly citizen, it is advisable to mention here, that he died in the month of January, 1829, leaving a character highly distinguished for loyalty and integrity as a merchant and alderman of London. The only friend mentioned in his will was Lord Sidmouth, whom he "requested to accept of 50*l.* as a slight memorial of his regard."

same cheerful strain to another of his colleagues, Lord Melville, who was then enjoying his vacation in Scotland. "I have," he said "been in a state of official solitude for several days, but they have passed very quietly. The storm of some years has been followed by a calm, which would be absolute stagnation, was it not for a slight rippling on the surface, occasioned by the dismission of Sir Robert Wilson." The waters were soon further ruffled by "very unpleasant accounts from Ireland," which his Lordship reported to Lord Londonderry on the 20th of October. "Parts of the counties of Limerick and Kerry," he stated, "are in a very agitated state. An atrocious and concerted murder has been committed on Mr. Going, the chief police magistrate of the county of Limerick, and the report of it was received with exultation throughout an extensive district. I trust, however, that this incipient rebellion, for such it is, will not last many days. The Irish government are acting with vigour, and their confidence will be increased by the arrival of two regiments, which are ordered to proceed immediately to Dublin from Liverpool." His Lordship's expectation of the early termination of these disturbances unfortunately was not realised; for on the 9th of November he was informed by Mr. Gregory, the Under Secretary in Ireland, that "the evil was making rapid progress through the county of Limerick; that agitators overran the whole district, compelling all persons, under the obligation of an oath, to join their confederacy, and had actually proceeded to the length of publicly offering rewards for the assassination of magistrates and policemen."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1821, 1822.

Change in the Irish Government. Lord Sidmouth's Letters to Earl Talbot and Mr. Grant, announcing the Appointment of Marquis Wellesley and Mr. Goulburn. His Correspondence with Lord Wellesley, Lord Londonderry, and Lord Manners, on Irish Affairs. Mr. Plunkett appointed Attorney-General in Ireland. Accession of the Grenville Party to the Government. Letters to and from Lord Wellesley. Lord Sidmouth resolves to retire from Office — Corresponds with his Friends on the Subject. Mr. Peel selected as his Successor. Letters from Mr. Peel to Lord Sidmouth and Lord Stowell. Lord Sidmouth resigns the Seals on the 17th of January. Receives Letters from Lord Liverpool, Lord Eldon, Mr. Justice Park, Dr. Adam Clarke, Bishop of Raphoe, &c. &c. on his Retirement. Complimentary Address from the Magistrates of Lancashire.

THUS early were the sanguine hopes of the empire — hopes in which Lord Sidmouth himself partially concurred — that Ireland would be conciliated by the paternal visit of her sovereign, most painfully disappointed. It now became evident that the almost unlimited system of forbearance and concession which had recently been pursued must be altered, and a more vigorous policy adopted; and as so extensive a change of measures could not so consistently be effected without a change of instruments, and as the usual period for the termination of the viceroyalty

was approaching, the government availed itself of the readiness of Marquis Wellesley to place his great experience and abilities at their service, and resolved to send his Lordship and Mr. Goulburn to Ireland, as successors to Earl Talbot and Mr. Grant. Although Lord Sidmouth's judgment acquiesced in this decision, his feelings strongly dissented; for he cherished the highest estimation both of the public character and private virtues of Earl Talbot, and had recently received from his Lordship a gratifying intimation of his wishes that the warm intimacy which had commenced between them from official connexion might be continued in private life. He also entertained a most favourable opinion of the eminent merits of Mr. Grant. It was, therefore, with extreme reluctance that, in the letters annexed, he communicated to parties so greatly respected a decision of the government which, though rendered necessary by circumstances which they could not control, would naturally be received by them with feelings of surprise, if not of disappointment: —

To his Excellency Earl Talbot.

" My dear Lord, Whitehall, Nov. 29th, 1821.

" Let me beg you to read, seal, and send the enclosed letter. I had intended to write fully to your Excellency; but I am relieved by having seen Lord Liverpool's letter, which expresses all that I could write on an occasion so distressing. The step which it has been deemed necessary to take, is in no degree inconsistent with the high esteem which is entertained towards your Excellency by the King and by every member of the government. My official life is nearly closed: the relation in which I have long stood to your Excellency has been one of the most gratifying circumstances

attending it; and I earnestly hope that the connexion of friendship may survive that of office, and that it may continue unweakened till it is broken by the hand of God.

"I shall ever remain, &c.

"SIDMOUTH."

The enclosure above referred to was the subjoined letter to the Irish Chief Secretary, the Right Hon. Charles Grant, which explained the views of the cabinet in fuller terms than Lord Sidmouth had an opportunity of doing in his letter to Earl Talbot: —

To the Right Hon. Charles Grant.

"My dear Sir, Whitehall, Nov. 29th, 1821.

"The state of Ireland and of its government has latterly engaged, in a more than usual degree, the anxious attention of his Majesty's confidential servants; and the result of their deliberations is a decided opinion that, as a change in the highest offices of that government could not be very distant, it is desirable and important that, under present circumstances, it should not be delayed. This opinion has been submitted to the King, and approved. It is founded upon a conviction, that long experience and eminent services in high and arduous situations, and all the authority, weight, and influence which can thereby be created, are indispensably necessary for efficiently conducting the government in the present state of Ireland. With this view, it was first in contemplation to advise his Majesty to place the office of Lord Lieutenant in the hands of the Duke of Wellington*;

* Extract from a letter addressed by Lord Sidmouth to the Earl of Liverpool, November 22d: —

"The letters received from Ireland yesterday and to-day have strengthened the impression which I wrote to you yesterday. I am satisfied that the government of Ireland ought to be instantly placed in the hands of the Duke of Wellington."

but this idea was laid aside chiefly on account of the impression, which such an appointment could not fail to produce, that the condition of Ireland required the military services of the most distinguished military character which this country possesses—an impression not warranted by fact, and, if acted upon, calculated to lead to consequences highly injurious. The minds of Lord Liverpool and of the other members of the cabinet were then turned towards Lord Wellesley, in whom the qualifications which I have stated appeared to them to be eminently combined; and, being most anxious that the Irish government should be so constituted as to conciliate the confidence both of Protestants and Roman Catholics, they conceive that object could not be more effectually accomplished than by the association of Mr. Goulburn with his Lordship as Chief Secretary.

"The bare possibility of giving pain to those now holding the highest stations in the Irish government is very distressing to every member of the cabinet; and if there be one to whom it must be peculiarly so, I am sure that person is myself. But we are strongly inclined to believe that you will not be insensible to the expediency of the proposed arrangement, and that you will give us the fullest credit for having been impelled to recommend it by a deep and urgent sense of public duty. I shall ever remain, &c.

"SIDMOUTH."

These communications were received in the most becoming and friendly manner by the high personages in question; to whose conduct, indeed, no blame whatever was imputed, and of whom, in a private letter addressed to Lord Liverpool from Dublin as late as the 29th of August, Lord Sidmouth had expressed himself in the following terms: — "You ought to know that not only the Lord Lieutenant, but Grant, is highly and generally respected. The former is universally popular, and the latter has many political but no personal adversaries."

Lord Talbot's courteous acknowledgment of the letter of recall was received on the 6th of December; and such was the urgency of the case, that Lord Wellesley and Mr. Goulburn were sworn into office, and kissed hands on their appointment, as early as the following Monday.

The pacification and good government of Ireland was an object worthy the genius of Marquis Wellesley, and Lord Sidmouth anticipated the best result from his friend's appointment to that responsible position. Much correspondence and numerous conferences now ensued between their Lordships, respecting the earlier measures of the new Lord Lieutenant; and in one of their conversations, Lord Sidmouth suggested the reply which Lord Wellesley subsequently made, when pressed to participate in the agitation of the Catholic question, that "he came to Ireland to administer the laws, and not to change them."

The importance which the cabinet attached to the appointment of Lord Wellesley is strikingly shown in a "private and confidential" letter which Lord Sidmouth received from the Marquis of Londonderry on the 8th of December. "After I left you yesterday," his Lordship observes, "I had a long conversation with Lord Wellesley, and my impression is, that, after some further discussion, his views for the conduct of the Irish government will be such as will fall in with the course of policy which you, the Duke of Wellington, and myself, would concur in approving. To insure this, I am extremely desirous of a joint conference between yourself, Lord Wellesley, Goulburn, and me, before Goulburn goes to Peel, to whom

he could carry the result, passing afterwards by Bath, to which place Peel would probably accompany him, that they might fully communicate with Lord Liverpool. We should then have passed all our difficulties in review, and Goulburn would meet Lord Wellesley in Ireland with such a matured view of the course to be pursued as would not only launch the new government under the most favourable auspices, but would furnish a solid foundation of admitted principles to guide us under any future difficulties."

The conference here suggested was appointed to be held at Richmond Park on the following Tuesday; but it appears, from the note annexed, that circumstances prevented its occurrence. From the same document it may be gathered that the conferences between these grave statesmen were not always confined to matters of a strictly political and serious character: —

"My dear Lord, Richmond, Dec. 11th, 1821.

"I arrived from the Pavilion about half-past ten this night, too late to trouble you. I had a very ample conference with Lord Londonderry, and we parted with complete mutual satisfaction. He informed me that he had communicated to you the impossibility of his attending you either to-day or to-morrow, and that Mr. Goulburn is to depart to-morrow: as he has received the sentiments of each of us separately, and as Lord Londonderry, you, and I have concurred on all the main points, I apprehend no misunderstanding. Lord L. proposes to see me for the last time on Friday next, between one and two o'clock, and suggests that we should dine with you afterwards on that day. Will this plan answer? The King received me with even more than his usual kindness: I had my last audience to-day, and all that passed was most satisfactory. H. M. has a *fable*, that you and I sat hand to fist and drank *six* bottles of claret at Richmond Park the

other night. He is much amused by this *tale*: I assured him, however, that the quantity of wine did not amount to *two* bottles, and that you told me it was *pectoral* claret, and would relieve my cold. I expect that you will hear much of this affair of the said *pectoral claret*. I was declared in council to-day, and my commission has passed the great seal. I propose to depart on Monday.

"Ever, my dear Lord, yours affectionately,

"WELLESLEY."

Mr. Goulburn took his departure for Ireland, after "another very satisfactory conversation with Lord Sidmouth," on the 12th of December, and was followed, before the end of the month, by the new Viceroy.

Lord Sidmouth was now anxiously occupied, with the approval of Lord Liverpool, in concerting an arrangement for adding strength to the Irish government, the particulars of which are fully explained in the following letter which, on the 12th of December, he addressed to Lord Chancellor Manners on the subject: —

"My dear Lord, Richmond Park, Dec. 12th, 1821.

"It is most affecting to compare Ireland as it now appears with its appearance in the month of August. Not that the seeds which have since put forth did not then exist; not that they could be deadened by the royal visit; but still the contrast that is presented to the eye and observation of the world is most painful and humiliating. We who witnessed and partook of the exaltation of the summer must deeply feel the abominations and the disgrace of the winter. * * * It is become the indispensable and urgent duty of the government, under the circumstances in which, from various causes, it is now placed, to take a full and comprehensive view of its own situation and of that of the country; and to use their best endeavours that it may be administered, in all its parts, by

competent persons, and upon sound principles. To the perfectly successful discharge of this duty, great obstacles are presented by the discordant opinions upon one subject in particular (and that of the highest importance) amongst those who enjoy the largest portion of the public confidence, and who are the most capable of being eminently useful at the present very critical conjuncture. An official government *cannot* be formed of those who entirely agree, either way, on this great question; but the existing government is formed of those, and it may be strengthened by others, who, differing on this point, think alike upon all other subjects, whether of foreign or domestic policy; and, without the union of persons so differing and so agreeing, such a government cannot be constituted as such times as the present indispensably require. A very considerable progress appears to be made towards effecting such an union. To complete and consolidate it, conciliation, not concession, is absolutely necessary. In Ireland, the government, I am confident, will be conducted upon this principle. Lord Wellesley knows that he goes to administer the laws, and not to urge an alteration of them; and, in his conduct towards Catholics and Protestants, no distinction, but what is made by the law, will be made by his secretary. But I have said a great deal more than I intended, without having adverted to the main purpose of my letter, which is, to entreat your best offices towards the removal of obstacles to the attainment of the object which is vitally important, and, therefore, indispensable; I mean that of placing Mr. Plunkett in the office of Attorney-General.

"I say all this rather as an *amicus curiæ* than as a minister; for my official career is, I trust, nearly closed. My wish is to enjoy some quiet and to be my own master during the remainder of my life; but whether that wish will be accomplished to its full extent, I mean of total and complete emancipation, is not yet, I am sorry to say, finally determined. Under all circumstances, and in all situations, I shall remain, with cordial and perfect regard, &c. &c.

"SIDMOUTH."

Lord Manners, in his reply to this communication, pointed out several obstacles to any arrangement of the nature suggested. These, however, were overcome, and early in the succeeding year the appointment of Mr. Plunkett as Attorney-General of Ireland, *vice* Mr. Saurin, who declined the offer of the Chief Justiceship, was carried into effect. The value which Lord Sidmouth here attached to Mr. Plunkett's assistance was by no means a newly-adopted opinion; for as early as the 16th of January in this year his Lordship had written to Earl Talbot and Lord Manners to the same effect; deploring, also, "the false delicacy which had heretofore prevented efforts being made with that view, and declaring it to be not his opinion alone, but that also of Lord Liverpool and Lord Castlereagh, that Mr. Plunkett was, of all men in the House of Commons, the most capable of promoting or thwarting the measures of the government."

Another accession to the ministry, at this time under contemplation, was that of the Grenville party, several members of which shortly afterwards accepted office, though Lord Grenville himself remained inexorable. Lord Liverpool mentioned this negotiation in the following extract, addressed to Lord Sidmouth on the 10th of December:—"I quite agree with you that the scruples of Lord Grenville are unreasonable, considering the formation and principles of the government, but I think they will be overcome." In his next letter, dated Bath, December 24th, his Lordship again alludes to the various arrangements in progress. "Lord Wellesley arrived here yesterday evening, and I have had a very satisfactory conversation with him; he proceeds on his way to Holyhead

to-day; I shall be anxious to hear of Goulburn's safe arrival. I have not said any thing yet to Peel about the time of his coming to town, but this I can settle with you when we meet on Friday or Saturday. I think it desirable that all the new arrangements should take place at the same time; and I should think that we might have a council at Brighton for the purpose about the 15th of January."

Lord Wellesley announced to Lord Sidmouth, on the 29th of December, his safe arrival in Dublin on the preceding evening after a tempestuous passage; and in the same letter requested him to forward the information to Lord Liverpool at Bath. This communication was followed some days afterwards by another, which, as it indicates how nearly the arrangements in progress were now completed, and was also the last despatch which Lord Sidmouth received from Ireland in an official capacity, will here be inserted.

"Dublin Castle, January 12th, 1822.

"My dear Lord Sidmouth,

"It is impossible to describe the satisfaction with which I received your kind private letter of the 8th. I sent a statement of the weekly reports from the country last night. I really cannot yet pronounce positively on the results, but I do not think the aspect of affairs more unfavourable. Dublin is perfectly safe and quiet, except the late grand riot at the Mansion House, when we drank you, Lord Liverpool, and Lord Londonderry, with outrageous noise.

"I have not yet received the Chief Justice's formal resignation; but in the mean while I think it absolutely necessary that Plunkett's appointment should be made without a moment of delay. This matter appeared to me of sufficient moment for the despatch of a messenger, by whom I hope you will return the King's letter of appointment. * * *

It is very necessary to support Mr. Plunkett steadily, and to manifest a disposition to expedite his appointment. It would be a sad result of the arrangement to weaken his zeal. * * *

"Believe me always yours, sincerely and affectionately,

"WELLESLEY."

The intimacy and correspondence between these eminent statesmen was maintained until the close of life. The only remaining letter, however, which it is deemed necessary at present to publish, is the one which Lord Wellesley received from his friend at the end of the first year of his viceroyalty; and which, as no better opportunity is likely to be offered, is here subjoined: —

To his Excellency the Marquis Wellesley.

"My dear Lord, Richmond Park, Dec. 24th, 1822.

"I congratulate you, not only on the failure of the late atrocious attempt*, but, I will say, on the attempt itself, as its immediate effect upon you has served to add to the lustre and dignity of your character; and the feelings which it has universally excited will give an increase of strength and authority to your government. For a long time after you went to Ireland, I purposely forbore troubling you with a letter; and I was fully aware that 'res dura et regni novitas' must so occupy your time and attention as to make it unreasonable for me to entertain a hope of receiving one. But I grew dissatisfied with a state of non-intercourse, and after having been encouraged by Blake, I determined to assail you with a letter before the close of the year. It will be a great

* This alludes to an atrocious assault committed on the Lord Lieutenant, on his attending the theatre in Dublin, in December, 1822, when a bottle was thrown at his Excellency.

pleasure to me to hear from you. I hope you will say much of yourself, but I do not wish you to say much of unfortunate Ireland. Nothing that even you can say, and nothing that even you can do, can raise a hope in my mind of a considerable and early change in the temper, disposition, and condition of a very large portion of the inhabitants of that noble but unhappy country. You will adopt the wisest and best measures to control the spirit of outrage. Your government may and will be distinguished for its firmness and benevolence; but what is to become, in times of scarcity, of an overflowing, a continually increasing, and (to a frightful extent) an unemployed population, by whom subsistence cannot be obtained by labour, and to whom it is not secured, as in England, by law? To such a wretched state of society a general turnpike act would be as suitable a remedy (and perhaps a better) than Catholic emancipation. Forgive me, I beg you, for having allowed such a vagrant latitude to my pen; but having been carried so far, I now find it difficult to restrain it. * * * An entry in the Terence, which you so kindly gave me, when we parted last December, reminds me of the day of your leaving Richmond Hill for Ireland: this recollection is accompanied with another, which, I have no doubt, frequently recurs to your mind — I mean the dinner-party, consisting of three, at your house, a few days before your departure. It was, I am confident, not less satisfactory to you than to *our poor friend*, Londonderry, who often mentioned it with great pleasure.

"You, I am sure, were deeply affected by the dreadful event of August last. Here it excited an universal sentiment of astonishment, grief, and horror. Adieu!

"Ever affectionately yours,

"SIDMOUTH."

Lord Wellesley was visited in the following year by Sir John Malcolm, formerly one of his secretaries in India, who on his return reported very favourably to Lord Sidmouth of the manner in which his Excellency was pursuing his distinguished career. As

the testimony of so eminent a character to the wisdom evinced in Lord Wellesley's appointment, is important to those who made the selection, advantage will be taken of the present opportunity to introduce the letter of one who for many years was Lord Sidmouth's honoured friend, and occasional correspondent. *

" My dear Lord, Hyde Hall, 26th November, 1823.

" My engagements in the country will prevent my seeing your Lordship at an early period. I therefore send you the copy of a letter which I wrote some time ago to the Duke of Wellington. I need hardly say this communication is private, as his Grace might not like my showing the letter addressed to him; otherwise, there is nothing of a private nature in the subjects treated. Lord Wellesley, you will delight to hear, is really in good force, and if he is fully appreciated, and well supported, will do you good work. Matters in that strange scene, Ireland, appear to me just at that crisis when all his highest qualities, if allowed their scope, will do essential good; and he understands, beyond any man I ever met, the value of public principle, and how to apply it. He hates jobbing; and when satisfied with those who act with or under him, he gives a confidence, and infuses a spirit, that quite corrects the evils of delay and misunderstanding, that must, under other circumstances, arise from his

* Sir John Malcolm's career, almost equally striking in a literary, civil, and military point of view, was too early cut short by an attack of fever, in 1833. There exists a letter from Lord Sidmouth to Lord Colchester, dated September 8th, 1823, in which Sir John Malcolm is mentioned in the following terms: —

" I, too, have been engaged in the very interesting history of Central India, a copy of which was sent to me by my friend Sir John Malcolm. It is singular that I should never have mentioned him in that character to you. He wrote to me frequently during his latter campaigns in India, and I have preserved his letters as most valuable. He is a first-rate man, full of intelligence, candour, and honour."

own habits of business not being so regular as could be desired. I know your Lordship's anxiety in all that concerns Lord Wellesley, who requested me to convey to you the strongest expression of his friendship and sense of your continued kindness; and it is this knowledge which has emboldened me to intrude the perusal of my crude opinions on subjects you understand so much better than I do. I was glad to find the extreme Catholics as much out of humour with the Lord Lieutenant as the extreme Orangemen: it was the natural consequence of the course he was steering. I shall say more when I have the honour to see your Lordship.

"I am, my dear Lord, yours, &c. &c.

"J. MALCOLM."

It may be gathered from the preceding extracts, that during the present, as in former autumns, Lord Sidmouth remained at his post in charge of the executive authority, whilst his colleagues were enjoying their vacation, after having borne the brunt of the parliamentary campaign. "How good it is of you to pull the oars, and send us all a-pleasuring!" was the grateful acknowledgment to this effect which Lord Londonderry addressed to him from Blickling* on the 19th of December. This accommodation could not have been the less cheerfully rendered on the present occasion, that the earnestly-desired termination of his official services had now at length arrived. Although neither the faculties of his mind, nor his bodily energies, had hitherto presented any indications of declining vigour, by listening to the monitor within, he had discerned the wisdom of re-

* This baronial mansion — the residence of Caroline Lady Suffield, eldest daughter and heiress of John second Earl of Buckinghamshire — is a noble specimen of the Elizabethan style of architecture. It was the birth-place of the unfortunate Anna Boleyn, and is situated near Aylsham in Norfolk.

tiring before the eye was dim, or the hand weak, or the spirits broken; and of diverting the thoughts whilst they retained their full powers, from the trivial concerns of this life, to the momentous interests of eternity. His growing determination to act upon this conviction had long been developed in his correspondence; but the actual arrival of the period which he considered best adapted for the fulfilment of his purpose was first disclosed, on the 11th of November, to Bishop Huntingford, in reply to the good prelate's exhortations not to retire altogether from public life. "I ought," his Lordship observed, "to have thanked you sooner for a letter, which was particularly acceptable to me, as it stated your unreserved and deliberate opinion on a point to which my mind is now very earnestly directed. That I should be desirous of a life of less confinement and restraint (to say nothing of fatigue and anxiety) than that which I have led for nearly ten years, cannot, I think, be considered by any one as strange or unbecoming. Most people, I believe, are surprised that, after sixteen years previous service in office, I should have been induced to hold my present situation so long. I am now weary of it; and at this period of internal quiet, I feel that I have satisfied all the just claims upon such services as I was capable of rendering; and that the proper time for my retirement from my present office is arrived. I say present office, because I am aware, that, earnestly as I wish for entire emancipation, I am not at liberty to determine absolutely upon a total retirement from public life; but I *must* be materially *relieved*, if I cannot be wholly released. My difficulties are not

diminished by the friendly resistance of his Majesty and my colleagues, who cannot, however, but admit the reasonableness of my claim to, at least, comparative ease and liberty. This point, however, and others of far greater importance, will probably be settled, in some way or other, in the course of a few days."

In his reply to this communication, the venerable mentor proffered the following piece of advice, which, if happily it had been observed by the party addressed, would have substituted for the present imperfect undertaking a work replete with wisdom and instruction: — "Once again I refer you to 'Cicero de Senectute,' where Cato describes himself as occupied in compiling his 'Originum Liber.' Sully and De Thou also, when retired from office, composed, one his Memoirs, the other his History. Their writings are the more interesting, because each recorded the circumstances in which he had himself participated. Have thirty years of your life been less eventful? Infinitely more so.

'Aliquid invadere magnum
Mens agitat mihi, nec placidâ contenta quiete est,'

is noble in feeling and expression. Act on that sentiment. Commence and pursue a history of your own times, from 1788 to 1822. The employment will be commensurate with your ability, and posterity will thank you for such a κτημα ες αει."

Lord Sidmouth replied as follows to his revered adviser: — "Your letter gave *stimulos volenti*. At all events, I shall arrange my papers, and from time to time my recollections. It is impossible for me to be insensible to the impression which my retirement

appears to have produced; but my firm belief is, that the appointment of Mr. Peel will be found highly conducive to the convenience and advantage of the government, and of the public service. I enclose an official letter on the subject of my resignation, which I beg you to return. The amount of the pension is limited by act of parliament. His Majesty has expressed great regret at what he is pleased to call its insufficiency. Conferred as it was, I have not declined it; but I should never have mentioned it myself. The offer of an earldom has been repeatedly and, if I may presume to say so, pressingly made; but I decisively declined. I must enclose a letter from the Chancellor, as I am sure it will please you."

Writing a few days afterwards to Mr. Pole Carew, his Lordship touched upon another motive to his retirement at that particular period. "The truth," he observed, is, "that it was *because* my official bed was become comparatively a bed of roses that I determined to withdraw from it. When strewn with thorns I would not have left it; but I now think myself entitled to enjoy some quiet, and to be, in some degree at least, my own master during the remainder of a life which has lasted nearly 65 years."

Since nothing which relates to a step so important as that which his Lordship was now taking ought to be omitted, the explanation of the circumstance which he gave to his intimate and confidential friend Mr. Bond will here be added: — "I take up my pen to tell you that I have nearly closed the 'evening of my various day.' An official life of almost thirty years will probably terminate in a few days; and I may now hope to be comparatively my own master during

what may remain to me of mortal existence. This prospect I contemplate with great, but not with unqualified, satisfaction: for I am not insensible to some of the effects of the change that awaits me; but I feel that the 'tempus abire' is arrived, and that there is no obligation of duty or honour which should or ought to deter me from obeying the impulse. My emancipation will, however, be imperfect, for I must still remain a member of the cabinet."

These arguments, with which Lord Sidmouth justified his intended resignation, were by most of his correspondents deemed conclusive: there were some, however, who considered that the period had not yet arrived, when he would be fully justified in withdrawing the benefit of his matured wisdom and experience from the service of his country; and so earnestly did his valued and intimate friend, Colonel, now Lieutenant-General, Sir Howard Douglas, entertain this opinion, that he could not refrain from addressing to his Lordship the following judicious and affectionate remonstrance: —

"My dear Lord, Passy, January 26th, 1822.

"I have just read in the papers that your Lordship has resigned your high post at the helm of our domestic state affairs. The vessel is, for the present, safe in the port to which you have so ably conducted her, and thus the time is propitious for carrying into effect the retirement your Lordship has long contemplated from a very laborious and difficult office. Having, during so long and so tempestuous a time been charged with such a duty, we should not allow ourselves to express regret that your Lordship should *now* withdraw from *it:* for the present favourable aspect of our domestic affairs, succeeding to the period of extreme difficulty during which your Lordship conducted them, shows the accomplishment of all your expectations, and proves the

success of measures which will continue to operate favourably upon the tranquillity of the country under the administration of other hands. But whilst I congratulate your Lordship on having closed another portion of public life and high trust with so much honour, I cannot bring myself to greet you or the country on *total* retirement; you would, indeed, carry with you into private life as much matter for conscientious enjoyment and most satisfactory retrospect as ever a public man was blessed with. But, my dear Lord, I never was much charmed with the poetical figure of reposing under the laurel, so long as the mind retains its vigour, and the body its activity. If, therefore, it be your Lordship's purpose to retire *altogether* from public life, I cannot bring myself to do otherwise than to *condole* with all parties concerned, viz. the country, your family — and yourself. Your Lordship has great resources for enjoyment in your own thoughts, and in your family; but it is quite impossible that you should be able, at present, so completely to abstract your powerful mind from public affairs, as to repose tranquilly in domestic life and occupations; and I do sincerely hope that you will not be permitted to do so *altogether*. Will the ladies forgive me for expressing such a wish?

"With our kindest regards to all the family, believe me, my dear Lord, your obliged and affectionate

"HOWARD DOUGLAS."

His Lordship's answer to this letter is not in existence; but the following letter, dated January 13th, 1822, in which he replied to similar arguments addressed to him by Mr. Le Mesurier, has fortunately escaped destruction*: —

* This, it is believed, was the last letter which Lord Sidmouth ever received from that esteemed and devoted friend, who died on the 14th of the succeeding July. He was a good scholar, a sound divine, a frequent and able writer, both on theological and political subjects, and, as the whole tenour of his correspondence testifies, a man of deep and genuine piety.

"You tell me that some of my friends are disposed to think that the state of my health is not such as to justify my retirement. Of my actual condition they must be uninformed; but I know that all those who see the most of me, and who most regret my resignation, rather wonder that I have been able to go on so long, than complain that I withdraw too soon; and those whose opinions and wishes ought to have the greatest weight with me allow that I could not have chosen a time for my retirement which would have been less embarrassing to the government and the public service. The truth is, that it is not merely advanced age, or health, or family considerations, or the fatigue of official business, or the irksome nature of my public duties, but, more than all these, a weariness of continued restraint, and separation to a great degree from my family and friends, a desire to be, comparatively, my own master, and a deep sense of what is due, particularly at such an age as mine, to other and higher considerations than those which are applicable to public life, and to which a man must be very differently constituted from what I can pretend to be, if he supposes that he can give the time, weight, and influence, which they deserve and demand, amidst the continued occupations and bustle of such a public situation. In the cabinet, by the command of the King, and at the earnest desire of all my colleagues, I am to remain, though, I confess, I should prefer complete emancipation. I have said more, much more, than I intended, and more than I ought, considering that your situation, feelings, and hopes, ought to have engrossed my thoughts and my pen."

Such being the motives to his Lordship's retirement, it remains to describe the circumstances under which that object was carried into effect. The arrangement was finally settled on the 29th of November, 1821, on which day Lord Sidmouth addressed a confidential note to Mr. Bathurst, containing these few words: — "Mr. Peel comes to this office, Lord Wellesley and Goulburn go to Ireland, and Mr. Charles

Wynn, I believe, to the India Board; Mr. Canning is in a state of indecision, though Lord Hastings's resignation is absolute." Lord Sidmouth's great consolation under the anxiety which it is natural to feel on retiring from a position which has been held for so many years was, that he should resign his office to Mr. Peel, of whose future eminence he had already formed an almost prophetic anticipation. "It is a great satisfaction to me," he observed to Mr. Bathurst, "that Mr. Peel is to be my successor. I am sure there is no one so well qualified for the office. Nothing could have been more becoming and creditable than his conduct. He will derive the best assistance and the greatest comfort from Hobhouse, whom he has requested to remain." * The letter in which Mr. Peel acknowledged Lord Sidmouth's congratulations on his appointment will here, with permission, be introduced: —

"Lulworth Castle, December 1st, 1821.

"My dear Lord Sidmouth,

"I am confident you will heartily wish me success in my arduous and perhaps impolitic undertaking. Nothing can be so likely to promote it as that assistance and advice which your past kindness leads me to expect from you, and I do assure you most sincerely, that no part of Lord Liverpool's letter, offering me the seals of the Home Department, gave me such unqualified satisfaction as that which announced your consent still to remain a member of the government. I am, my dear Lord Sidmouth, most truly yours,

"ROBERT PEEL."

* The other Under-Secretary of State, Henry Clive, Esq., M.P., for whom his Lordship ever afterwards entertained a sincere regard, would, no doubt, have also been continued, had it not been understood that he desired not to remain in office after Lord Sidmouth's retirement.

Three days afterwards Mr. Peel expressed similar sentiments to Lord Stowell in a letter, which, from the circumstance of family connexion, subsequently became intermixed with the Sidmouth papers: —

"Lulworth Castle, December 4th, 1821.

"My dear Lord Stowell,

"I feel very sensibly the kindness of your letter, though I fear I cannot look upon my intended appointment as a fit subject of congratulation. It will compel me to make very painful sacrifices; and I am almost overpowered by the fear that I have undertaken what is beyond my strength. For Lord Sidmouth I have long entertained not only the highest respect but a strong personal regard. I had the satisfaction, for a considerable period, of standing in a relation to him, which led to confidential and unremitted intercourse; and it is gratifying to me now to remember how completely free it was from the slightest difficulty or misunderstanding. I am as confident that his friendship will induce him to give me all the assistance in his power, as I am firmly persuaded that it will be of the utmost value to me. Believe me, my dear Lord Stowell, most faithfully yours,

"ROBERT PEEL."

Although Lord Sidmouth's retirement was arranged as early as the 29th of November, it was not until the 17th of January, 1822, that he resigned the seals of office into his Majesty's hands.* Two days before that event, he received from Lord Liverpool the following official letter already alluded to in his communication to Bishop Huntingford: —

* This event he announced on the same day to a friend in the following terms: — "I am just returned from Carlton House, where I delivered the seals of my late office into the hands of the King. His Majesty was extremely gracious, and all passed off well. As an official person, therefore, 'extremum quod te alloquor hoc est.' Health, happiness, and success attend you!"

"My dear Lord, Jan. 15th, 1822.

"As the time is now approaching when, in conformity to the wishes you have so long manifested, you will deliver into his Majesty's hands the seals of the office of Secretary of State for the Home Department, I feel I cannot allow you to enter into the royal presence, for this purpose, without (in obedience to the King's commands) expressing to you the deep sense his Majesty must ever entertain of the ability and integrity with which you have discharged the duties of the high and important situation which you have filled for so many years.

"It is a consolation to his Majesty, under such circumstances—and, I may add, to all his confidential servants—that you should have consented to give to his Majesty and his government the benefit of your advice and assistance as a member of his cabinet; and as a mark of his Majesty's royal favour, and in just consideration of the value of your services, his Majesty has been pleased spontaneously to confer upon you a pension of 3000*l.* a year, under the authority of the powers recently vested in him by parliament.

"I cannot conclude this letter without assuring you of the personal satisfaction which I have derived from so many years of official communication with you; and I sincerely trust that, as we first became confidential servants of the crown at the same time, our intercourse may continue with undiminished confidence till the close of my public life.

"I am, with sincere regard, my dear Lord, yours very faithfully,

"LIVERPOOL.

"To the Viscount Sidmouth."

Lord Sidmouth's retirement was now no longer a secret. Of the numerous letters received from his contemporaries, expressing esteem and regret, on the conclusion of his political life, a small part only can be selected for publication. Of these the earliest in date proceeded from the pen of Lord Eldon:—

"I was more oppressed yesterday," his Lordship observed —"'digressu veteris confusus amici'—than to be able to offer you then, as I now do, my cordial and affectionate wishes that you may long live, after retiring from your late office, to enjoy the sweet remembrances of a well-spent life in a situation of unparalleled difficulty. You are, indeed, well entitled to recall your services in your late office with satisfaction, when the country cannot but recollect them with gratitude. 'Quæ dicere non potui scribere jussit amor.' Allow me to say that 'amor' means the affectionate regard with which I am, most sincerely, yours,

"ELDON."

A deep feeling of personal regard and gratitude for its writer, has led to the insertion of the annexed letter from the Honourable Sir James Allan Park, one of the justices of the court of Common Pleas, whose Christian virtues, integrity of character, and benevolent disposition, most justly endeared him to a numerous circle of friends: —

"My dear Lord, Bedford Square, Jan. 18th, 1822.

"I hope your Lordship will pardon my intrusion, in troubling you with a few lines upon your retirement from the most laborious office in the administration of public affairs. As far as yourself is concerned, I congratulate you that you retire into the bosom of your family in the enjoyment of that happiness which must ever be produced, in a well-regulated mind, by the consciousness of having most faithfully discharged all the duties of your late important and arduous station. But, for myself and my country, I lament the change; because, wishing to speak with all due respect, and even affection, of your Lordship's successor, it is impossible for him or any other man to give greater satisfaction than you always have done to those whose opinion was worth enjoying. He will, however, enjoy one great advantage in possessing *your* example for ten years, passed under circumstances, of the home administration, more difficult and

perilous than, I hope, will ever occur in this country again; and which, if they had not been met by a firmness and judgment equal to your Lordship's, might have involved the country in almost irretrievable ruin. And I am quite sure that the order, to which I have the honour to belong, are under peculiar obligations to your Lordship for your constant urbanity and condescension and easy access, whenever it became necessary to apply for it. For myself, in particular, I dare not attempt to express how much of affectionate respect and gratitude I feel for all your kindness to the individual who now addresses your Lordship. That you may long enjoy the happiness arising from the consciousness of having spent a useful and most important life with the applause of all the good, is the sincere prayer of, my Lord, your Lordship's faithful and affectionate servant,

"J. A. PARK."

The following extract was addressed to Lord Sidmouth by his old friend Dr. Butson, now elevated to the see of Raphoe:—

"Raphoe, Feb. 14th, 1822.

* * *

"That your Lordship, after a lengthened series of years of unexampled public difficulty and danger, in which you had to sustain incessantly the most laborious and anxious duties, should be desirous to seek repose, cannot, to any one, be matter of surprise. * * * Your Lordship's political life has been commensurate with a period distinguished by a rapid succession of events the most stupendous and awful that the history of modern times records. In all these the part your Lordship has acted has been prominent and influential: it has been signally marked with wisdom and fortitude, and, under the Divine blessing, with success. Among the great human instruments by which the empire has been borne through all its storms, your Lordship has been a principal,—*pars magna*. You have lived to see it ride in safety. You have lived to receive this noble recompence for your exertions. But, still more, you have lived to exhibit to the world the example of a good man passing through the conflicts of politics and the

temptations of power, without compromising any one principle of individual rectitude, or tarnishing any one virtue of private life; and then descending into a voluntary retirement, followed by the regrets of the country and the applause of every honest man. That the leisure, which your Lordship (with a prudence greater than usually falls to the lot of man) has chosen to interpose between the bustling concerns of public station and that momentous condition of things which is to succeed the present, may be enriched with every comfort that the remembrance of the past can yield, and with every blessing which the prospect of the future can bestow; — that it may furnish to yourself the calm enjoyments of a well-spent life, and, in the concluding scene, crown the honours of the upright statesman with the glories of the faithful Christian; — these are wishes that flow from my heart as sincerely as if their object were connected with its affections by the tenderest ties."

The next letter — which proceeded from the pen of Dr. Adam Clarke — is presented as the last with which the author proposes to close his selections from the correspondence of that distinguished scholar: —

"Northampton Square, August 19th, 1822.

"My good Lord,

"It is only the rude necessity of the times which would make me say a word on a subject which I am afraid will not be pleasing to your Lordship's ear; and with which, perhaps, *I* should not meddle — I mean the obligation under which the nation is to your Lordship's administration of the Home Department, for its present peace, and the prevention of many evils which threatened the country, and which, in the apprehension of most, and those the best informed, were unavoidable. Your Lordship knows that in those 'troublous times' to which I refer, I lived in the most disturbed district; and were it not state heresy, I would say, that, from actual observation and general acquaintance with the disposition of the people, I was full as well qualified to judge of the propriety of the measures adopted, as any member of the House

of Commons, whether loving or unloving to your Lordship; and of what vast importance an *upright public character* is, in the administration of public affairs. Your Lordship's character was a bulwark to your measures; and the high confidence which the vast majority of the nation had in its untarnished rectitude prevented a general uneasiness which would have otherwise taken place, and produced a conviction that all things would end as they did — *well*. For more than half a century, I have been a pretty close observer of men and manners, of almost every rank in society, and of public and private affairs; and I feel authorised to say, that *probity* of *character* weighs and is felt where *influence* of *every other kind* may be exerted in vain. This was your Lordship's security, and this gave credit, vigour, and efficiency to your Lordship's measures; and when the *minister* retired, and not till he had done his work, did he retire, the cleanness of his hands demonstrated to the country that it had not formed a wrong estimate of his character; and his honour shall live when 'time shall have blurr'd with blackest ink' that of many a contemporary name. * * *. My good Lord, forgive this — the rudeness of the times has compelled me to say what has been long in my heart: of *flattery*, your Lordship cannot suspect me, when I feel myself thus impelled to do an act of *justice*. 'Absentem qui rodit amicum — et qui non defendit, alio culpante, niger est.' This blame does not lie at the door of him who has the honour to be, my good Lord, your Lordship's most obliged, humble, and affectionate servant,

(Signed) "ADAM CLARKE.

"The Right Hon. Lord Viscount Sidmouth, &c. &c. &c."

It requires considerable self-control to refrain from introducing many other most friendly and interesting letters which his Lordship received from various friends on this occasion; but it is impossible to find space for more than the following gratifying attestation to his enlightened zeal in promoting the reform-

ation of unhappy convicts, received from the respected chaplain of the hulks at Sheerness: —

"My Lord, Sheerness, January 26th, 1822.

"I hope your Lordship will kindly overlook the liberty, which a humble and grateful individual takes in writing once more. I sincerely regret your Lordship's resignation. Whatever good may hereafter be affected among the convicts, one thing is certain, that *more has been achieved,* during your Lordship's administration, than at all previous periods put together. Very many of those, who received mitigation of sentence through your Lordship's recommendation, are now, to my certain knowledge, living honestly, and are (I hope) praying God to bless your Lordship for your goodness towards them. Whilst mercy has been shown, the *end of justice has been fully answered.* According to my ideas, founded on past occurrences, there are not two out of forty of those, who are recommended, who abuse the clemency shown them. It may (in my humble opinion) be extended, provided the overseers and chaplains continue (as I hope they have hitherto done) to act their part therein impartially.

"I have, &c. &c.

"E. EDWARDS."

Amongst the public testimonials which accompanied Lord Sidmouth into his retirement, none afforded him more satisfaction than the subjoined address from the magistrates of Lancashire; with which, and the annexed reply, it is intended to close the extracts relating to this subject: —

"My Lord, 1st February, 1822.

"Impressed with sentiments of veneration for your Lordship's character as a disinterested statesman, and with a deep sense of the very eminent services rendered to the kingdom at large, and more especially to our own immediate neighbourhood, by your support of the magistracy during a period of unexampled difficulty and danger, we, the undersigned magistrates of Lancashire and Cheshire, beg leave to offer to

your Lordship, on the resignation of your high office of Secretary of State, our united tribute of respect and gratitude. As magistrates, trying circumstances have enabled us to estimate your value in your public capacity; as men, to appreciate your private virtues.

"Under this conviction, and warmed with these feelings, suffer us to approach your Lordship, not merely as a great but a good man, descending from an elevated station into a dignified seclusion from the cares of government, respected and beloved by every true patriot. Accept, my Lord, the fervent wishes of magistrates, attached from principle to your Lordship, for your welfare and happiness in your present retirement; and may your future days be as calm and tranquil, as your former life has been upright and honourable. With sentiments of profound respect, and most devoted regard, we have the honour to be your Lordship's most faithful and obedient servants,

"WILLIAM HULTON.
J. PHILIPS.
R. FLETCHER.
THOMAS WILLIAM TATTON.
ROBERT FIELDEN.
JOHN CROSSLEY.
WILBRAHAM EGERTON.
JOHN ENTWISLE.
R. WRIGHT.
THOMAS LYON.
E. T. ETHELSTON.
J. P. HUMPHREYS.
JOHN BESWICKE.
JAMES WATKINS.
THOMAS BLACKBURNE.
J. SILVESTER.
J. RIDGWAY.
ISAAC BLACKBURNE.
W. MARRYOTT.
PETER MARSLAND.
GEORGE RIGBY."

To the Rev. E. T. Ethelston, and other Magistrates of Lancashire.

"Gentlemen, Richmond Park, Feb. 8th, 1822.

"I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, transmitted to me by the Rev. E. T. Ethelston, and I trust it cannot be necessary for me to assure you of the high and grateful sense which I entertain of such a testimony of your approbation and esteem.

"The duties of my late office necessarily brought me into

frequent communication with the acting magistrates in various parts of the kingdom, and I well know that no degree of public gratitude can be more than adequate to their public services. To that tribute you, gentlemen, are eminently entitled. In times of turbulence and danger, your vigilance, promptitude, and courage never failed; and at periods the most critical, it was by your firm execution of the laws that you were enabled to maintain their authority, and to avert consequences the most calamitous. The satisfaction afforded me by the sentiments which you have been pleased to express of my conduct is accordingly heightened by my experience of your own; and it will always be to me a subject of the most gratifying reflection, that, under circumstances of peculiar difficulty and general alarm, I had to co-operate with gentlemen of your intelligence, principles, and energy, in those exertions which were requisite for the maintenance of public tranquillity, and for the preservation and support of the liberties and constitution of our country.

"I have, &c. SIDMOUTH."

Lord Sidmouth had now effected the object which he had so long meditated. He carried with him into retirement the respect of the kingdom, the esteem of his colleagues, and the affectionate regard of his friends. One important ingredient of happiness to a retired statesman, the "conscientia benè actæ vitæ, multorumque benefactorum recordatio," he enjoyed to an extent which falls to the lot of very few. He had served his country successfully in the three most important positions in which a subject could be placed — as Speaker of the House of Commons, as Prime Minister, and as Secretary of State for the Home Department; and he could challenge the world to question the integrity of motive which had dictated any single action of his public career. After

thus conveying, therefore, into private life the best security for happiness and contentment, it need scarcely be added, that his Lordship enjoyed to the utmost his newly acquired liberty, and that during the remaining years of his protracted retirement, he was always serene, cheerful, and resigned.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1822—1844.

Motion in the House of Commons respecting Lord Sidmouth's Pension rejected by a triumphant Majority. His Lordship goes to Town on the Death of Lord Londonderry, and attends the Funeral. His second Marriage, to the Hon. Mrs. Townsend, Daughter of Lord Stowell. He resigns his Seat in the Cabinet— The Grounds of his Resignation considered. He divides his Time between Richmond Park and Early Court— Makes two Excursions to the Continent. Sudden Illness of Lord Liverpool, and consequent Dissolution of the Government. Lord Sidmouth's Anxiety at the Aspect of the Times. His Letter to his Daughter and Son-in-Law. Death of the Duke of York. Lord Sidmouth's Opinion of the Corn Law. He supports the Duke of Wellington's Administration. He acquiesces in the Repeal of the Test Act. He converses with the Prime Minister at the Cabinet Dinner, on the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, which he strenuously opposes. He speaks on the Second Reading of the Bill. Death of George IV. The Government, being out-voted in the House of Commons on the Civil List, resigns. Lord Grey's Administration introduces the Reform Bill, which is rejected by the House of Lords. The second Reform Bill introduced. Ministers resign, but are re-appointed. The Bill carried. Correspondence between the Duke of Wellington, Lord Sidmouth, and the Rev. John Keble, respecting his Grace's Bust. Lord Sidmouth discontinues his Attendance in Parliament. He survives nearly all his Friends. Prayers composed by Mr. Tierney. Deaths of Mr. Bathurst, Bishop Huntingford, Lord Exmouth, Lord Stowell, Lord Eldon, Duke of Gordon, Lord Wellesley, and others. Lord

Sidmouth resigns his Pension. Death of Lady Sidmouth — Lord Sidmouth's chastened Submission, and timely Preparations for his own Departure. His last Illness and Death.

ALTHOUGH the gracious commands of his sovereign, and the friendly solicitations of his colleagues, induced Lord Sidmouth to retain for the present his seat amongst the confidential advisers of the crown, still, as his official labours and responsibilities were now at an end, the period of his resignation of the seals was generally considered by his friends, and will consequently be so regarded by the author, as the real date of his retirement from public life. Now, instead of devoting each successive day to anxious and continued occupation, his only duty consisted in giving his attendance, when summoned, at cabinet councils. So sudden, indeed, and complete was the change, as almost to justify an apprehension that his retirement might prove not less detrimental to his own happines than, many believed it would be, to the public interests. He enjoyed, however, his hardly-earned leisure without diminution from that or any other cause; and although the author must be permitted to doubt, with Sir Howard Douglas and others, whether his Lordship did not deprive the country of his services at an earlier period of life than the state either of his health or faculties apparently required, he ever afterwards declared that he reflected on the time and circumstances of his resignation with undiminished satisfaction.* Before, however, his

* "Of public life," he said in a letter to the Bishop of Hereford, "I took a final leave when I retired from the cabinet in November,

harassed spirits were permitted to subside into tranquillity, they had once more to undergo the ordeal of political assault. The ground of attack was his Majesty's having, of his gracious and unsolicited favour, conferred upon his Lordship one of the six pensions which had been assigned, by the act of parliament passed in 1817, to parties who may have held certain specified cabinet offices; not *one* alone, but *five* of which Lord Sidmouth had successively filled, to the entire satisfaction of the crown. His Lordship had also declined to accept the customary pension for his twelve years' services in the Speaker's chair, though it was earnestly pressed upon him by Mr. Pitt in 1805; and in addition to this, he not only would accept nothing on his resignation of the premiership, but subsequently refused the chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, which was offered him for life. In fact, a man more disinterested, more entirely free from ambition or avarice, did not exist; consequently Mr. Creevy made a most unfortunate selection for his own cause when, on the 26th of June, he adduced Lord Sidmouth's case to parliament as the ground of his hostility to the "Ministerial Pensions Act."* It is not surprising, therefore, that Lord Londonderry and the other friends of Lord Sidmouth, who knew the integrity of his character, and his utter contempt

1824. On that step, though taken in resistance of high authority, and against the wishes of my colleagues and friends, I have always reflected with satisfaction."

* The principal argument employed was, that his Lordship had given his son an office of near 3000*l.* per annum; but the state of that son's health was such as to render his tenure of the office most precarious. He died, in fact, in the course of the following year.

of sordid lucre, should have expressed great indignation at this unjustifiable attack, or that the House of Commons, which divided nearly four to one against the motion*, should, when it learnt the facts of Lord Sidmouth's disinterestedness, have exhibited the feeling which was described to his Lordship two days afterwards by the Honourable Captain Pellew, M.P. for Launceston, in the terms subjoined: —

"My very dear Lord, Cowes, June 28th, 1822.

"If I was gratified by adding one vote to your Lordship's cause on Wednesday night, how shall I describe what I felt at the decided, and I may almost say universal, regard and respect that pervaded the House of Commons during the discussion of the Pension Bill, as far as your Lordship was concerned. I am sure, my dear Lord, you will agree with me in thinking such a feeling as this is a man's best reward for a life spent in the public service; for in my conscience I believe no minister ever retired from public life with so high, so honest, a character as your Lordship, and who possessed, in so eminent a degree, the esteem and good opinion of all the well-disposed and right-thinking part of the community.

"I remain, &c. &c.

"P. B. PELLEW."

Those who attacked Lord Sidmouth on that occasion may not possibly have been acquainted with the real circumstances, and were only influenced by political considerations. The subject, therefore, is here introduced, not in disparagement of individuals, but merely to indicate the uncharitableness and illiberality of party spirit, and its constant tendency to create erroneous feelings and impressions.†

* The numbers were 143 to 42.

† "It is no wonder," Mr. Hume has observed, in treating of the calumnious accusation against Charles II. and the Duke of York,

Early in the month of August, 1822, Lord Sidmouth availed himself of his liberty to visit his second daughter, at her residence in Yorkshire, where, on the morning of the 14th, he was aroused from his sleep by a messenger, who brought the distressing tidings of the death of the Marquis of Londonderry. His surprise and grief on receiving this intelligence were remarkable. Only on the 3d of the same month he had dined with his Lordship at his retirement at Foots' Cray, and had been much struck with the vivacity and cheerfulness he then displayed. As the King was in Scotland, and there remained no one at head quarters to assist Lord Liverpool, Lord Sidmouth hastened up to town, where he attended the funeral of his lamented friend in Westminster Abbey on the 20th, and took part in the deliberations consequent on the loss of so important a member of the administration. Some of these proceedings his Lordship briefly described to Mr. Bathurst in a letter dated "Clifford Street, August the 16th." "You will not," he observes, "be surprised to hear that I am in town. After such a communication as that which I received on Wednesday morning, I could not bear to remain at Sutton, whence I arrived at four o'clock yesterday afternoon, accompanied by G. Pellew. I have seen Lord Liverpool, who is tolerably well.

Our poor friend had betrayed symptoms of a disturbed

of having murdered the Earl of Essex, "that faction is so productive of vices of all kinds. For, besides that it inflames all the passions, it tends much to remove those great restraints, honour and shame; when men find that no iniquity can lose them the applause of their own party, and no innocence secure them against the calumnies of the opposite." Vol. viii. p. 200.

and agitated mind, occasionally, towards the close of the session. * * * Huskisson told me yesterday that he was in a state of extreme irritability and apprehension respecting the Superannuation Bill. The most generous and intrepid of mankind also was harassed by suspicion and alarm."

After officiating as a pall-bearer at the funeral on the 20th, when, as he informed Mr. Bathurst, "upon the production of the coffin from the hearse, there were three cheers from some savages amongst the populace," his Lordship resumed the course of family visits which had been so painfully interrupted.

No further incident worthy of record disturbed the tranquillity of his comparative retirement during the remainder of the present or the earlier portion of the succeeding year.* Before, however, this new course of life had long been pursued, one result of his Lordship's retirement, which, probably, had not been anticipated, was experienced in the revival of those desolate and lonely feelings which even the most affectionate filial attentions will not entirely remove, occasioned by his domestic bereavement twelve years before. These had hitherto been postponed, but not eradicated, by the incessant labours and onerous responsibilities of his official situation which left him no leisure for their indulgence; but his Lordship had no sooner returned to the quiet scenes and habits of earlier days than he felt that

* During the two years of his Lordship's comparative relaxation, he sustained the loss of three old and valued friends, whose deaths must have confirmed him in the propriety of his own final retirement — Mr. Le Mesurier died in July, 1822; Dr. Blackburne in January, 1823; and Mr. Bond in the October following.

there exists in the conjugal relation a sympathy of mind, an intercommunity of thought and feeling, which nothing else can adequately supply. Under these circumstances, early in the summer of 1823 he successfully addressed his attentions to the only daughter of his early and admired friend, Lord Stowell, and the widow of Thomas Townsend, Esq., of Honington Hall, Warwickshire; and on the 29th of July was united to that lady in the parish church of St. George's, Hanover Square.

Notwithstanding a very considerable disparity in the ages of Lord and Lady Sidmouth, this marriage proved one of true affection, and was productive of a large increase of happiness to all parties concerned. From the lengthened acquaintance and intimate neighbourhood of her father and present husband, the lady had known and admired the latter from her earliest years. Constant association with learning and genius at her father's house had matured her judgment, and an affectionate and devoted attendance of ten years on an invalid husband had diffused over her whole character the mellowed effects of time. Thus early formed and matured, her Ladyship's ardent thirst for knowledge, and her admiration of every thing that was great or good, rendered her a suitable and interesting companion for one more advanced and experienced than herself; whilst her own excellent understanding enabled her to appreciate, and her gentle and affectionate disposition to admire, the numerous eminent and attaching qualifications of the object of her wise selection. Though delicacy might prefer the omission, yet gratitude requires the mention, of the prudent, friendly, and generous line

of conduct by which she quickly won the very sincere affection of the members of Lord Sidmouth's family. The only essential requisite to his Lordship's entire enjoyment of the sweets of retirement being thus supplied, it was not probable that his self-approval of the step he had taken in the preceding year would undergo any diminution. His friends, therefore, much as they regretted the circumstance, were not surprised to learn, a little more than a year after his marriage, that on returning from his autumnal excursion, he had severed the one remaining link which connected him with public life, by requesting Lord Liverpool on the 26th of November, 1824, "to lay before his Majesty his humble request that he would be graciously pleased to dispense with his future attendance at the cabinet." Anticipating opposition to his wishes, Lord Sidmouth took this final step without consulting his friends; and it was not until he had received from Lord Liverpool the annexed reluctant acceptance of his resignation that he communicated the fact to a single correspondent: —

[Private.]

"My dear Lord, Coombe Wood, Nov. 29th, 1824.

"I have received, with great regret and concern, your letter informing me of your determination to withdraw yourself from the cabinet. Whilst I must lament any circumstance that can interrupt, in any degree, those confidential communications on public affairs which have now for so many years existed between us, I feel it due to you to say, that if your domestic arrangements would not admit of your being a regular attendant at the cabinets and in the House of Lords, I cannot blame your decision.

"I shall immediately lay before the King the letter which I have received from you; and I have no doubt his Majesty

will most fully participate in the regret which I must experience on the occasion of your retirement.

"Believe me, my dear Lord, very sincerely yours,

"LIVERPOOL."

As soon as his Lordship's severance from official life was completed, he imparted the fact to his friend, Lord Bexley, in the following note: —

"My dear Lord, Richmond Park, Nov. 30th, 1824.

"Before this reaches you, you will probably have heard of my having requested the King's permission to withdraw from the cabinet, at which, as I shall reside chiefly in the country, it would not be possible for me to attend with proper regularity. I took the step upon full consideration, and without the previous knowledge of any person whatever, except Lord Liverpool, whom I desired to lay my request before his Majesty. I have thus closed my public life, during which I have served my country zealously and faithfully; and I ardently wish that I could have served it more usefully. All I now hope for is, 'a calm evening to a busy day.' On all my intercourse with you, from the very commencement of our acquaintance to the present time, I reflect with great and unalloyed pleasure; and your friendship will constitute a very material part of my comfort and happiness during the remainder of my life.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"SIDMOUTH."

Although his Lordship, in the foregoing letter, has assigned the difficulty of attendance as the prominent ground of his resignation, it appears from a correspondence with Mr. Canning, in July, 1824, which, though perfectly amicable, manifests a considerable difference in their views respecting South America, that there existed another reason which possibly may have contributed to that step; namely, his inability to reconcile his opinion to that "of so many of his

colleagues," who advocated the immediate "recognition by his Majesty of the independence of Buenos Ayres." It is evident, indeed, that he already perceived the germs of those approaching changes in the policy of the cabinet, and those differences amongst its members, which would probably have led to its early dissolution, even if that event had not been precipitated by the sudden and eventually fatal seizure which befell Lord Liverpool in February, 1827. We may reasonably suppose, therefore, that a laudable desire to avoid unprofitable discussions, and to close his public career in harmony with all his colleagues, had some share in accelerating his Lordship's resignation.

The limits of this work preclude even an attempt to trace with minuteness the steps of this venerable statesman through the twenty years of dignified Christian retirement which he was permitted to enjoy. He continued to manifest that deep interest which a patriot must ever take in the welfare of his country, lamenting over all invasions of its constitution, rejoicing at its prosperity, and, in its adversity, always looking forward in search of a brighter prospect. From his suburban retirement, also, he continued to pay careful attention to his duties as a peer of parliament, giving his personal attendance on all important questions as long as health permitted, and afterwards, to the last, intrusting his proxy to his faithful and valued friend, Lord Bexley. As we trace his descent, however, through the vale of years, the few particulars of his public conduct which still remain unnoticed will be brought to light; nevertheless, it is to his conduct in retirement, and the employment of his private hours, that attention will

chiefly be directed during the remaining pages of this work.

From the period of his resignation Lord Sidmouth divided his leisure hours between Richmond Park and Early Court, in Berkshire,—the peaceful abode of Lady Sidmouth's maternal ancestors. There he was principally occupied in the pursuits of literature; in the exercise of benevolence and charity; in cheerful and instructive converse with his family and friends; in the society of his admirable partner (whose precarious health was the only drawback to his happiness), and in sharing her anxiety, whilst with true filial devotion she watched over the declining years of her distinguished father. His autumns he usually dedicated to a series of visits amongst his friends in the west of England; but during the summers of 1825 and 1826 he indulged himself and family in two brief expeditions into France and Germany. On the first of these occasions he "set out early in August, accompanied by his three unmarried daughters—Lady Sidmouth remaining with her father, to whom her attentions were as valuable as they were delightful to herself." Landing at Calais, the party "visited Lisle, Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, Namur, Liege, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Frankfort, Heidelberg, Strasburg, Chalons, and Paris; returning, at the end of five weeks, by Boulogne." At Frankfort the Queen Dowager of Wirtemberg graciously sent a message to Lord Sidmouth; in consequence of which, he and his eldest daughter waited upon her Majesty, who was then at the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Her resemblance to King George III. was very striking, and the Queen seemed much pleased with Lord Sid-

mouth's notice of it. She related some interesting circumstances which occurred during the war; and mentioned, that at one time her only means of communication with the royal family in England was through the Emperor Napoleon, who courteously forwarded her letters. On the same day, Lord Sidmouth and his eldest daughter had the honour of dining with the Landgrave of Hesse Hombourg and her Royal Highness the Landgravine (Princess Elizabeth), by whom they were received in the most kind and gracious manner at the Château de Hombourg; and the Princess presented Lord Sidmouth with a beautiful snuff box, which he preserved amongst his most valued relics.*

In his second excursion in the August and September of the following year, Lord Sidmouth was accompanied by his lady. In the first instance they directed their course to Holland; and, after "visiting Utrecht, Amsterdam, and Harlem — which all surpassed their expectations — the Hague, which rather disappointed them, and Leyden, of which they could not say a favourable word," retraced their steps to Boulogne, where Lady Sidmouth had the gratifi-

* Shortly after his return to England, Lord Sidmouth received a letter from his attached and valued friend and political adherent, Charles Duncombe, Esq., to inform him of "the good Protestant spirit that was spreading in Yorkshire, and that a deputation from a highly influential meeting at York had just waited upon his son, to obtain his consent to being put in nomination for the county whenever a dissolution should take place." Not long afterwards, his Lordship had the satisfaction to see his friend elevated to the peerage by the title of Lord Feversham, and his son elected one of the representatives of Yorkshire, an honour which he continued to enjoy until his accession to the House of Lords.

cation to find her father and brother. Here the travellers were joined by Lord Sidmouth's three daughters, and shortly afterwards proceeded with them on a little excursion to the banks of that "revolutionary torrent, the Loire." Arrived in La Vendée, his Lordship took a peculiar interest in tracing the memorials of the heroic and devoted army of Royalists; and, at Nantes, visited the scene of the murderous *Noyades*, and the spot where the brave but unfortunate Charrette closed his patriotic career.

Prosperous, however, and gratifying as these expeditions were, they served principally to strengthen Lord Sidmouth's devoted attachment and deeply-rooted preference for the habits and institutions of his own country; and he did not hesitate, on his return, to inform his correspondents how "delighted he was again to find himself on British ground."

Thus his days flew rapidly onwards, presenting no particulars for special record, until the sudden and calamitous visitation which befell Lord Liverpool in February, 1827, awakened at once his anxiety for his country, and his sympathy for his friend, whose rising talents he had himself first employed in a high official situation, by appointing him Secretary of State in 1801, and in intimate communion with whom, as a confidential adviser of the crown, he had passed so many years with the utmost harmony and satisfaction. His own firmness in council, and vigour in action, were a stay and support to Lord Liverpool, whose anxious mind, ever intent upon its duties, reposed with confidence on the calm and manly decision of Lord Sidmouth's character. On the other hand, his Lordship ascribed to Lord Liverpool, in

addition to the most unimpeachable and sterling integrity, the possession of other highly valuable and essential properties of a leading statesman. In describing those qualifications, he used to remark that Lord Liverpool was discretion personified — that he was the best, fairest, and most perspicuous debater in parliament of a knotty and important question he had almost ever known; and that, in council, he brought a foresight to bear upon the impending difficulties of any subject, and the probable proceedings of an opposing party, such as none of his contemporaries possessed in an equal degree.

It was not, therefore, on private grounds alone that Lord Sidmouth deplored the stroke which had deprived the administration of its head and bond of union. It was impossible he could contemplate the public results of that event, combined with the prevailing aspect of the times, without perceiving indications of the approaching invasion of those leading principles of church and state policy, which he had been accustomed through life to regard as established and unchangeable. Considerations, however, of this nature usually proved less mortifying to him than to the generality of mankind. The principles of his philosophy were founded on religion and resignation; and are thought to have been happily expressed in the following letter, which he addressed to his daughter and son-in-law on the commencement of the preceding year: — "The first use of my pen, on this the first day of the new year, shall be to thank you for two very gratifying letters of congratulation. It has pleased God to permit the last year to pass without any afflicting change in the wide circle of our family

connexions: but whilst we are grateful for the past, let us not be so weak and presumptuous respecting the future, as not to be aware that many severe trials await us all, and that it is our urgent duty to prepare our minds to meet them with resignation and fortitude. Yours is a fair prospect; but it would be as weak to wish as it would be to expect that any human prospect should be without clouds; and certain it is, that from every cloud real good may be derived.

> "To be resign'd when ills betide,
> Patient when favours are denied,
> And pleas'd with favours given:
> Dear ——, this is Wisdom's part,
> This is that incense of the heart
> Whose fragrance reaches heaven."

The year 1827 witnessed the completion of his Lordship's 70th year, "bringing with it, as he remarked, an awful admonition, by which, with the blessing of God, he hoped to profit." At that advanced period of life the pangs occasioned by the loss of friends necessarily become more frequent; and on the 6th of January in this year we find Lord Colchester condoling with him on the death of the Duke of York, which calamitous event had occurred on the preceding day. "Sorrow, unfeigned and unavailing sorrow," he observed, "makes me turn towards you, to pour out my grief for the loss of the Duke of York. A more gloomy event has not happened in our days. The state and the army will both miss their support." From his inmost heart could Lord Sidmouth respond to these sentiments; for he ardently admired the Duke's manly, generous, and patriotic

character, and had long been honoured by his Royal Highness with many gratifying proofs of confidence and friendship. In the month which followed this national bereavement, Lord Sidmouth's repose was for a time interrupted by the parliamentary agitation of that "vexata questio," the corn laws, on which he always espoused those views which tended to encourage domestic production, and make the kingdom independent of foreign supply. In writing to Mr. Pole Carew, on the 7th of February, upon this subject, respecting which he used to say, "England is England's best customer," his Lordship dropped the following observation, which is thought to be not altogether inapplicable to existing circumstances: — "There is one truth to which I have always attached the greatest importance, and which ought to be universally broached and inculcated. I mean that agriculturists are in an error in supposing that the discouragement of importation would raise the price of corn; as are the manufacturers in imagining that the encouragement of foreign supply would have the effect of lowering it. This truth is not brought to view by the light of political economy, but established upon the solid foundation of experience."

The only remaining subject of the year in which Lord Sidmouth took a peculiar interest, was his venerable father-in-law's retirement in December, at the age of eighty-two, from the judgment-seat of the court of Admiralty. This was a step which, it will be seen, Lord Sidmouth had long considered advisable, and therefore cordially rejoiced at. The

letter in which he mentioned this circumstance to his eldest daughter alludes also to the omission of Lord Eldon's name from the list of members of the Wellington administration — an omission which he sincerely regretted, as calculated to deprive the government of a portion of the confidence and popularity which it would otherwise have received. This, however, did not prevent him from enforcing on every occasion the incalculable importance of supporting the new government, or from most highly admiring the disinterested and patriotic conduct of its chief, who, purely from devotion to his sovereign and country, took upon himself so undesired an office. These topics are thus briefly touched in the letter before alluded to, which is dated January 27th, 1828. "Lord Stowell, as you probably will have heard, has resigned his office, to Lady S.'s and my great relief and satisfaction. Almost all the letters I have received (and they have been numerous) have expressed extreme disappointment and chagrin at the manner in which the new government is constituted. * * * In fact, the opportunity of forming an administration that would have gone the farthest towards satisfying the country has been most unfortunately lost; but though the vessel may not be manned entirely to our mind, I hope she will be found sea-worthy, and will conduct us into port." A few days afterwards his Lordship reported to Mr. Bathurst the substance of "a talk, which, though brief, was very interesting," that he had held on the 4th of February with the premier. "I stated to his Grace that I should not fail to give my support to the government whenever it could be

given consistently with the opinions which he knew I entertained on certain subjects ; that I was happy to see him in the situation which he held, because I thought it afforded the best hopes of re-establishing confidence, and a good understanding between this country and the powers on the Continent, and of averting from us the evil of an unprincipled war. These hopes, I am happy to say, appeared to be entertained by himself, and his whole behaviour was perfectly open and friendly."

As regarded the repeal of the Sacramental Test Act, which was effected in the session of 1828, his Lordship informed his daughter on the 15th of March, that "he should not oppose the bill if it contained the oath or declaration which Mr. Peel expected to carry in the House of Commons." But in the autumn of this year symptoms appeared of meditated concession to the claims of the King's Roman Catholic subjects which gave great uneasiness to Lord Sidmouth and other veteran supporters of the church-and-state principles of the 18th century. Amongst those most deeply interested on this occasion was Lord Stowell, who, on the 24th of November, called forth all the remaining energies of his mind, in strongly urging Lord Sidmouth "to depart from those resolutions of consulting his own ease, whereby he endangered the public safety, and to reconsider more seriously the question of his returning to office; he did not mean to any office of a laborious nature, but to such a one as would give him a right of interfering in the councils of the state, which did not appear to be going on in a very salutary manner. This," he added, "is the wish of all your friends, not

for their private interest, but for the great object of the public safety. Can there be a doubt that the Duke of Wellington, yourself, and my brother would come into office with general acclamation, and would be hailed as the restorers of public tranquillity? I write this *ex animo;* I am sure it would be the most popular act of your life."* ''

Lord Sidmouth had now entered his seventy-first year; and although the judge who at eighty-two composed the celebrated decision on the case of the Slave Grace, when unable through infirmity either to write or read it, might consistently deem a man of only seventy capable of rendering further public service to his country; yet the party addressed prized much too highly the "eleganter actæ ætatis placida ac lenis senectus," not to leave to younger and less unbending politicians the task of regulating and restraining, as best they might, the growing tendency of the public mind towards changes and innovations.

* Lord Stowell's eyesight had now so nearly failed, that he employed an amanuensis to write this letter. He must have submitted to the same necessity in preparing his judgment in the slave case, had he not availed himself of the willing and able assistance of his daughter's highly-valued and excellent friend, the late Mrs. Gaskell of Thornes House, near Wakefield, who cheerfully undertook the office of writing down the judgment from his dictation, and procuring from his library the references for which he had occasion. Until this period, his Lordship's intellect still exhibited occasional traces of its former brightness, though the flashes were rapidly becoming fewer and fainter. He was no admirer of the prevailing rage for universal education, and about this time made a remark on the subject with which Lord Sidmouth was much struck. "If you provide," he said, "a larger amount of highly-cultivated talent than there is a demand for, the surplus is very likely to turn sour."

Firm, therefore, to his determination, Lord Sidmouth, during the remainder of his life, restricted himself to the temperate but uncompromising discharge of his duties as a private member of the British legislature. In that capacity, indeed, he fully obeyed the dictates of his conscience, partaking most usefully in that arduous struggle in which the House of Peers endeavoured to preserve for posterity the blessings of the British constitution; and regulating his vote on each occasion, not by expediency—for which, like his first royal master, he entertained a rooted dislike—but by a firm adherence to established principles. Hence, as each momentous question arose, those who knew him well could readily anticipate his decision upon it; and none of his friends, therefore, were surprised, when, in opposition to some of the most valued and honoured of his former colleagues, he resisted the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, even to the last division on the third reading; and when, three years afterwards, he manifested his disapproval of the Reform Bill in the same unflinching manner. These two are the only remaining subjects of his Lordship's public conduct, of which further mention will be made in this work, and of them, the promise, recently made, to be brief will allow only the slightest possible outline to be given.

On the 4th of February, 1829, Lord Sidmouth attended the ministerial dinner at the Duke of Wellington's, and previous to the reading of the speech, had the honour of a short conversation with his Grace on the subject of the important concession recommended in it. The Duke, who was extremely friendly and candid, rested his justification solely on

political necessity*; and he did not appear either surprised or displeased at Lord Sidmouth's declaration, "that he would be obliged, however reluctantly, to oppose the government on that particular question." A few days after this conference his Lordship briefly expressed his sentiments in the following note addressed to Lord Exmouth, who fully participated in his anxiety and disapprobation on this momentous subject: — "Of your opinion and intentions I have had no doubt; of mine you could not but be assured. For many persons great allowances must be made, on account of their confidence in the judgment of the Duke of Wellington, and in the correctness of his view of the comparative danger of resistance or concession. *I* cannot, however, sacrifice principle to expediency, nor become a party in attempting to avert immediate difficulties at the expense of an irremediable, a permanent, and, I fear, a fatal blow to the Protestant constitution of this country. When the bill for putting down the Roman Catholic Association shall have passed through the House of Lords, Mr. Peel will then introduce into the House of Commons his measure of concession and securities; the latter may diminish, but they cannot counteract the evil." Lord Exmouth, in his reply, expressed much gratification at finding his friend "waiting events so unmoved and serene; determined to do what was right himself; regarding the discord around him with

* "It is a bad business," he said, "but we are aground." — "Does your Grace think, then," asked Lord Sidmouth, "that this concession will tranquillise Ireland?" — "I can't tell: I hope it will," answered the Duke, who shortly discovered, and had the magnanimity to admit, his mistake.

silent contempt; willing to run any risk to save his country, and trusting to the protection of Providence for the result."

Influenced by such motives, on the 4th of April, which was the third night of the debate, Lord Sidmouth opposed the motion for the second reading of the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, in a highly argumentative and statesmanlike speech, which, as it was the last he ever delivered in parliament, is presented, without abbreviation, in the Appendix. His Lordship rose in reply to the Earl of Westmoreland, who had attributed the necessity for concession which, he was pleased to suppose, existed, to the encouragement given by Lord Liverpool's government to those who were favourable to the Roman Catholic claims, and had specially attributed to Lord Sidmouth the responsibility of the three following measures: "The appointment of Mr. Charles Grant to be the leading minister for Ireland; allowing the Roman Catholic bishops, in their paraphernalia, to present an address to the King*; and the letter addressed to the people of Ireland on his Majesty's departure." To these topics, therefore, his Lordship's reply, in the first instance, was addressed. Lord Sidmouth fought this battle under a conviction of inevitable defeat; and only a few days previously had written thus to his son-in-law: — "For the first time in my life I am dis-

* The truth is, that Lord Sidmouth firmly resisted the claim urged by Lord Fingall, that the Roman Catholic bishops, when presenting their address to the King, on his visit to Ireland, should be received by his Majesty on his throne. It was finally arranged that they should be received, as the Presbyterian ministers were, in their robes, in the royal closet.

heartened. We seem to be in a shattered boat, and in a strange and agitated sea, without pilot, chart, or compass." His surprise, therefore, at seeing the bill passed, on the 10th of April, by the votes of 213 peers over that of 109, in the same House which, on the preceding year, had rejected a similar bill by a majority of 45, was not equal to that of Lord Exmouth, who put to him the question — "How, my dear Lord, can we account for this immense majority? I had formed no conception that the influence of government could have been so strong in our House: I think that you must yourself have been surprised, long as you have been accustomed to manage the affairs of the kingdom." The answer which Lord Sidmouth returned to his friend's inquiry is not known; but one "apology for, or rather justification of, the ministerial measure of emancipation," which had been quoted to him by his son-in-law, he rejected with indignation, as "utterly unfounded in fact, and most futile and contemptible, if the fact were true. I have heard," he proceeded, "a great deal during my life of the probable defection of our soldiers, but never knew an instance of it — in the first American war, in the Irish rebellion, in the time of the Radicals, in the Queen's business, &c. &c. Lord Londonderry knew his countrymen, and raised a regiment consisting of United Irishmen, to assist in putting down the rebellious and formidable confederacy to which they belonged; and they never failed him. And yet in the pretext stated is to be found the explanation and excuse for a permanent and irremediable blow to the Protestant constitution of this country."

On the 26th of June, 1830, Lord Sidmouth's feelings

of loyal and dutiful attachment sustained a painful shock in the decease of his Majesty George the Fourth — a sovereign whom for ten years he had served with the utmost firmness and success, under the most trying and difficult circumstances; and who had testified his sense of those services by substantial marks of approbation, accompanied with the gracious offer of still higher rewards.

We now pass on to the only subject remaining for consideration — that of parliamentary reform. At the assembling of the new parliament, summoned on the accession of King William the Fourth, many valued representatives of the principles of former times were no longer to be found. Still, probably, the minister might have stood his ground, if the whole body of his original supporters could, like Lord Sidmouth, have forgiven his concession of the preceding year. This, however, was not the case; and, on the 15th of November, some of these parties, uniting with the original opposition, in a division on a motion for a select committee respecting the civil list, placed the government in a minority of twenty-nine. In writing to Mr. Bathurst on the following day, Lord Sidmouth expressed much disappointment at this proceeding. "Last night's division," he said, "was a surprise to the ministers and their opponents. The general expectation appears to be that the Duke will resign to-day. In that case, the regrets of the good, and the fears of the wise, will be almost universal." The event *did* occur as here predicted; and his Lordship at once anticipated from it the most disastrous consequences to the principles which, through life, he had espoused. Nor was he mistaken; for when his

Majesty, on the Duke of Wellington's resignation, sent for Earl Grey, that nobleman, true, it must be admitted, to the opinions of his life, would not undertake to form a new government except on the condition that parliamentary reform was to be made a cabinet question. Accordingly, when parliament, which had been prorogued for an unusual period, to enable the King's servants to concert their measure of reform, re-assembled, on the 3d of February, the ministerial plan was submitted to the House of Commons by Lord John Russell; and, after a series of important debates, its principle was affirmed on the 22d of March, by a majority of one, in a house consisting of 608 members — the largest number that had ever been assembled. On the 19th of April ministers were defeated in committee on their proposition to reduce the aggregate number of members in the House to the extent of sixty-two, by a majority of eight; and, in consequence, they advised his Majesty immediately to dissolve his parliament, although it had not yet completed its first session.

The new parliament assembled on the 14th of June; and elected, as it was, under circumstances of such unparalleled excitement, the early transmission of a bill of reform from the Lower to the Upper House no longer remained a matter of doubt. This event, therefore, took place on the 22d of September, and the 3d of October was selected by the Peers for the discussion of the measure. Lord Sidmouth was now seventy-five; but the occasion fully aroused his patriotism and pristine energies, and called forth his activity to save his country, if possible, from what he considered a grievous calamity.

" Neptunus muros magnoque amota tridenti,
Fundamenta quatit"—

was his expression to his son-in-law: — " This trident is actively at work, and the venerable old edifice is tottering." Influenced by such motives to exertion, his Lordship is found, on the 25th of September, requesting the attendance in his seat of the Bishop of Salisbury, who replied, that " although he had for some time considered himself as *emeritus*, and was inclined never to enter the House of Lords again, yet that the tremendous measure now before the House, and his Lordship's acute feelings on the subject, which accorded entirely with his own, would certainly induce him to venture up to London to oppose a measure, which, he feared, would end, not very remotely, in the overthrow of the monarchy and the church." Although he had prepared notes and heads for a speech, with much care and ability, Lord Sidmouth did not find an opportunity to address the House on the subject of reform — prevented, probably, by the multiplicity of speakers, and the excitement and confusion which prevailed even in that usually decorous assembly; but he attended every debate on the question, and constituted one of the majority of forty-one, by which, on the 7th of October, after a discussion of five nights, the first Reform Bill was rejected. His Lordship held the proxy of Lord Exmouth, whose declining health prevented his attendance, but who regarded passing events with an interest dictated by that pure flame of patriotism which, in minds influenced by religion and benevolence, never burns more brightly than when the end

of life approaches. To him Lord Sidmouth, on the 11th of October, thus expressed his sentiments respecting this absorbing topic: — "You will have heard with delight the result of last week's service; and you will not be sorry to hear, that, hard as it was, I have not suffered from it. What is to follow perplexes all the powers of conjecture; a creation of peers, resignation of ministers, prorogation of parliament, all come within these limits. At all events, we must expect a considerable degree of agitation, which no pains will be spared to keep up and heighten. But we have done our duty; and there can be no comparison but what, I am convinced, will prove satisfactory, between the consequences of performing and those which could not but be anticipated from neglecting it. But I write as a short-sighted mortal; a higher power must decide our destiny.

"Pray mention Sir William Grant in your next, and tell him that I have just passed two hours at Lady Gifford's with Sir Walter Scott. He is feeble on his legs, and he has an aged countenance; but there is very little abatement in the vigour and animation of his conversation, or, as far as I could judge, in the promptitude of his recollection. He is bound to the Mediterranean."

His Lordship employed a part of the brief interval between the rejection of the former Reform Bill and the production of its successor, on the 12th of December, in discussing with Mr. Pole Carew the best means "of introducing, with a probability of success, such alterations in the existing state of the representation as would satisfy the right-minded part of the community without injustice to individuals, or dan-

ger to established institutions. The notion," he added, "that something must be done, is very generally entertained; but whatever that may be, it will not, I am satisfied, materially improve the composition of the House of Commons; it will not render it better suited to the purposes for which it exists. Until it is proved that some great practical evil is justly attributable to the present structure of that House, and that it would admit of a remedy which would not be productive of some evil of equal or greater magnitude, my objections to a general reform will remain unshaken. Still I am compelled to feel that this ground is no longer tenable; and that an attempt must be made to satisfy the more temperate and conscientious reformers, without endangering the established institutions of the country. Some suggestions have been stated to me which appear well calculated for an outline to an efficient and salutary measure. If we were near each other I should have great pleasure in discussing with you the views which I have taken of this momentous subject; but I really have not health or spirits, still less inclination, to obtrude such a statement upon you." Whilst his Lordship was thus engaged, the populace of Bristol, Nottingham, &c. &c., exhibited, in acts of incendiarism, robbery, and bloodshed, the extremes to which an infuriated mob is capable of proceeding, when excited by unprincipled demagogues, and liberated from that wholesome moral restraint which Lord Sidmouth, by his wise precautions and unbending firmness, had exercised over them for so long a period. On the 28th of December, shortly after the revised measure of reform had been promulgated,

Lord Sidmouth expressed his opinion of it to his recent correspondent on that subject in the following terms: — "The new bill is divested of some of the injustice and some of the inconsistencies and absurdities of the former; but of these an abundance is still retained. The destructive character and tendency of the old bill remain unchanged and unmitigated in the new. Under its provisions too many doors will be closed against that accessibility to the House of Commons which ought to be afforded to all the classes of the community; and under its operation a domineering democratical influence firmly and irrevocably established. All attempts at reasonable compromise have proved abortive; and it is too evident that this object could not be effected without concessions which would be dangerous, or without such alterations in the bill as government dare not, and will not, accede to, whatever their wishes may be."

A brief representation of the fears and hopes by which his Lordship was affected during the progress of the bill through the House of Commons will now be extracted from the letters which he addressed at this period to his friends.

On the 23d of January he observed to his daughter, that "the project of extinguishing the House of Lords as a branch of the legislature appeared to have met with some obstacle, which might, however, be only temporary." "If a firm stand were to be made in the highest quarter, 'Lear might be a king again.'" This gleam of hope, however, appears speedily to have departed. "Would to God," he observed to Lord Exmouth on the 14th of February, "that we

could be relieved from the dead weight that oppresses our unhappy country; consisting, as it does, of a spurious liberality, of most dangerous though mock reform, of disgrace abroad, and misrule and turbulence at home." "You will find us all," he wrote, three days afterwards, to his son-in-law, "impressed with a deep sense of the awful state of the times. But fear is weakness. Let each of us discharge his various duties zealously and firmly, and learn to say, with humble confidence,

'Je crains Dieu (cher Abner), et je n'ai point d'autre crainte.'"

The day of action was now approaching: this he announced to Lord Exmouth on the 14th of March in the following terms: — "Early in the next month our contest will probably be commenced. There is too much reason to apprehend that some persons will do what they think wrong from the fear of doing what they think right. If the bill is allowed to go into a committee no amendment can or will be made in it, which ought to satisfy those whose sole object is to preserve the constitution, and which, at the same time, would be compatible with that efficiency which Lord Grey expressed his determination to maintain. In short, if he cannot have his own way in the committee, new peers will be made, and he will then have his own way upon the report. Our most valued friends, thank God, are firm. If you have not seen Mr. Croker's protest, I beg to recommend it to your attentive perusal." Writing to the same friend on the 29th of March, he thus resumes the subject: — "Lord Eldon's heart is in the momentous subject now before the House of Lords. The unsteadiness of some of those who contributed to the

victory in October last affects him deeply, as it must every one who thinks as he, and you, and I think, and who feel, on such subjects, as we feel. For my own part, I should prefer seeing this destructive bill carried by a most unconstitutional and flagrant misuse of the royal prerogative, than at the expense of the consistency, honour, and character, of the House of Lords. *I* will not, therefore, assist in relieving Lord Grey from the inducement to do wrong by doing wrong myself." With such impressions, his Lordship, on the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 13th of April, attended, in his place, the debate on the second reading of the bill, which terminated in the motion being carried by a majority of nine, he himself voting in the minority.* "Never," he afterwards said, "was there a greater disparity between argument and numbers, than on that memorable occasion."

The subject was again discussed, by the House of Lords in committee, on the 7th of May, upon the question whether, as proposed by Lord Lyndhurst, the enfranchising clauses should not be considered before the House entered on the subject of disfranchisement, when Lord Sidmouth voted in the majority of 151 over 116, against the ministerial proposition. On this disappointment, Lord Grey (as was generally understood) immediately advised the King to confer peerages on a sufficient number of pledged supporters of the bill to insure the passing of that measure; and when the anxious monarch declined such a daring exercise of his prerogative — which embraced, in reality, a departure

* Contents, 184; non-contents, 175.

from the spirit of the constitution scarcely less violent than those which had so recently caused his royal brother of France to lose his crown—his Lordship presented the alternative of his immediate resignation. This alternative, after taking a day for deliberation, his Majesty accepted, and immediately sent for his former Chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst, by whose advice he next consulted the Duke of Wellington, who, with his usual devotion to his country, and disregard of self, undertook the thankless office of endeavouring to form a new administration. His Grace on that occasion did Lord Sidmouth the honour to take him into his councils, and the latter attended the several meetings which were held at Apsley House. The circumstances of the country, however, were then too inextricable for the wisest advice to have unravelled, and, consequently, after a week passed in fruitless consultations, the Duke communicated to his Majesty that the commission with which he was intrusted had failed.* The true heroism with which his Grace had devoted himself on this occasion excited so warmly the admiration of some resident members of the University of Oxford, that they formed themselves into a committee, of which the Poetry Professor, the Rev. John Keble, acted as secretary, for the purpose of privately raising funds for procuring a bust of the

* This information Lord Sidmouth immediately imparted to his son-in-law in the note annexed: —

"My Dear George, Batt's Hotel, Tuesday, 5 P.M.

"The Duke's endeavours to form an administration have not succeeded. Lord Grey will, consequently, remain in office. I am desired to be at Apsley House at half-past nine this evening.

"Ever yours,

"S."

Duke by some eminent artist, to be placed in the picture gallery, in commemoration of his noble conduct at that conjuncture. When a sufficient amount had been collected, the committee, through Mr. Keble, applied to Lord Sidmouth to make their wishes known to his Grace, and to request his acquiescence in their humble scheme. This his Lordship accordingly did; and on the 3d of April, 1833, received from the Duke the following reply: —

"My dear Lord Sidmouth, London, April 2d, 1833.

"Till I received your note of the 30th, I had not an idea that any body of his Majesty's subjects had thought proper to approve of the course which I followed upon the occasion referred to. I felt that my duty to the King required that I should make a great sacrifice of opinion to serve him, and to save his Majesty and the country from what I considered a great evil. Others were not of the same opinion. I failed in performing the service which I intended to perform; and I imagined that I had satisfied nobody but myself and those of my friends who were aware of my motives, and who knew what I was doing, and the course which I intended to follow.

"It is very gratifying to me to learn that Mr. Keble, and other gentlemen of the University of Oxford, observed and approved of my conduct, and that they are desirous of testifying their sense of it in the manner stated in the letter addressed to your Lordship.

"They may rely upon it that I will attend Mr. Chantrey, or any body else they please, with the greatest satisfaction.

"I will do so, not only because I am personally gratified by their approbation; but I am grateful to them, as a public man and a faithful subject of the King, for the encouragement which they give to others to devote themselves to the King's service, by their applause of the course which I followed on that occasion.

"Ever, my dear Lord, yours most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON.

"The Viscount Sidmouth, Richmond Park."

In forwarding this reply, Lord Sidmouth expressed to Mr. Keble "the great satisfaction he felt at the special reference made on this occasion to the conduct of the Duke of Wellington in the preceding month of May, under circumstances the most critical; for in his humble opinion there never was an instance, in the course of his Grace's splendid career, in which the magnanimity of his character, and his high sense of loyalty and public duty, were more eminently displayed." The sequel of the history, after the failure of this attempt to form an administration entertaining more moderate views, may soon be related. On Lord Grey's resumption of the bill, Sir Herbert Taylor communicated to some of the Opposition peers, "his Majesty's wish that they would drop their further opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it might pass without delay;" and the consequence of this was, that a sufficient number of peers absented themselves from the remaining divisions, to enable ministers to carry their measure. Lord Sidmouth, personally, was no party to this arrangement, and he voted again on the 21st of May, in a small minority of 36 against 91, upon a question respecting the Tower Hamlets; after which, seeing the inutility of further resistance, he discontinued his attendance.*

* The bill was read a third time, and passed on the 4th of June, after a division of 106 to 22, but neither the Duke of Wellington, Lord Eldon, nor Lord Sidmouth, was present on that occasion. Lord Sidmouth voted once more in that session, on the 2d of July, in favour of Lord Roden's motion on the state of Ireland, when he was also in the minority; and again, on the 30th of July, 1833, against the third reading of the Church Temporalities (Ireland) Bill, when he was once more outvoted by 135 to 81. During one

This event constituted the termination of Lord Sidmouth's political life. It has been described somewhat circumstantially, that the reader may learn the sentiments of him whom Pitt, Fox, and Burke respected as their Speaker, on the revolution thus effected in the assembly over which he had so long presided. From that period Lord Sidmouth courted still more sedulously the shades of retirement, and, with one or two exceptions, only attended in the House of Lords for the purpose of taking his seat at the commencement of a new parliament, and thus entitling himself to a proxy, which he usually intrusted to the confidential and judicious custody of Lord Bexley. As he informed his son-in-law — "his public life might then be considered as closed: thenceforth he should rarely, if ever, attend the House of Lords. There was a time for all things, and his time for retirement had arrived." He was now 76; nevertheless, by his religious and moral habits in youth, and his diligent and patriotic exertions in manhood, he had laid the foundation of a happy and contented old age; and certainly few ever enjoyed that blessing to a greater extent. To describe the amiable course of

of the debates upon the reform question, he held a friendly colloquy with Earl Grey, who, he always thought, had been carried far beyond the views and intentions he originally entertained on the introduction of this measure. "I hope," Lord Sidmouth said, "God will forgive you on account of this bill: I don't think I can." To this Lord Grey replied, "Mark my words: within two years you will find that we have become unpopular, for having brought forward the most aristocratic measure that ever was proposed in parliament."

such a man, through the eleven years of his serene and gradual decline, in a way to satisfy the affectionate expectations and lively recollections of those who had the happiness to witness it, is an undertaking which the author, from personal feelings, well knows to be impossible. With the exception, indeed, of those delicate traits of character, the refined nature of which almost defies delineation, there is little else to record of his Lordship during this period, save the gradually contracting circle of his contemporaries and earlier friends, who one by one disappeared from around him, until at length he stood, like the last remaining column of some venerable fane — upright, and still beauteous in its loneliness, yet "single, unpropp'd, and nodding to its fall."

Some of these bereavements have already been mentioned; and as a record of the remainder will afford a convenient, if not the most suitable opportunity of continuing the biography to that final point which must terminate its own existence, a few of them will now be described in the order in which they occurred. The characters and opinions of Lord Colchester, who died in May, 1829, and of Lord Redesdale, who only survived until January, 1830, and the sincere regard Lord Sidmouth entertained for them, are matters with which the reader is already fully acquainted. But some further mention must here be made of another contemporary statesman whom Lord Sidmouth was destined to survive. Although his Lordship and Mr. Tierney were not early acquainted, at a later period the vicissitudes of public life brought them frequently in contact; and they were at one

time associated, and at another opposed, yet without diminution of mutual regard and esteem. Such, at least, were Lord Sidmouth's feelings; for his Lordship recorded, with evident marks of regret, that Mr. Tierney had suddenly expired, whilst sitting in his study, on the 25th of January, 1830. The memorandum to that effect is affixed to a copy of some MS. prayers found in the desk of the deceased, which Mr. John Pearse, for many years M. P. for Devizes, and the mutual friend of the parties, thinking they would interest Lord Sidmouth, kindly forwarded to him. The conjecture was correct: his Lordship was so much gratified by the perusal of these pious effusions, that he submitted them, in strict confidence, to a few of his most intimate friends. Nor were they in any respect undeserving of that distinction. They abound with marks of heartfelt sincerity, which clearly designate the writer as a man of deep and warm religious feeling; and as they fully and freely recognise those grand Christian doctrines to which the gift of salvation is attached, they will now, with the obliging permission of Mr. Tierney's son and representative, be presented to the reader, as a valuable and gratifying instance of the possibility of living under the influence of Christian principles, even amidst the turmoils of party politics, and the frequent interruptions of a public life.

"*March 20th,* 1827. Entered upon my 67th year. Tuesday.

"Almighty God, for the continual possession and enjoyment of my faculties, and for all thy infinite mercies from year to year vouchsafed to me, I humbly offer the sacrifice of

thanksgiving. As I approach to death, give me grace to profit by what remains of my life.

"Purify and cleanse my thoughts, O Lord: fortify me in all good intentions: make me to walk according to thy laws; to love, honour, and reverence thy holy name and thy word; to practise the precepts of the Gospel, and firmly and unfeignedly to believe in the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Redeemer."

"*Thursday, March 20th,* 1828.

"Lord, give me grace to profit by the timely warnings with which thy goodness has visited me; and may the consciousness of the increasing danger which surrounds me prepare me for the hour of death. For all thy past mercies vouchsafed unto me, I bless and adore thee. Spare me, O Lord; turn not away from me for my offences; and grant to my old age such a contrite sense of my infirmities, as may quicken in me a deep repentance for my transgressions in this life, and such an humble confidence in the mediation of Jesus Christ, our Lord, as may justify my hopes of pardon in the life to come."

"*Friday, 20th,* 1829. Entered my 69th year.

"Lord, I tread on the confines of life: let every hour remind me of my approach to death; and may thy grace attend upon me and direct my progress to the grave.

"Quicken in me, most merciful Father, a deep sense of contrition for the manifold sins and iniquities of my past life, so that at the last, when I shall stand before thee for judgment, I may, with humble hope, appeal for pardon and forgiveness to thy unbounded mercy, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, my blessed Lord and Saviour."

In the letter which accompanied the transmission of these prayers to Lord Sidmouth, Mr. Pearse observed, that "the one dated March 20th, 1828, was written at a period when Mr. Tierney, in conversation with himself and other friends, expressed his conviction, founded on shortness of breathing and other

symptoms, that he had water on the chest, and should not last long." Mr. Pearse concludes with an expression of satisfaction which it is pleasing to recite — "That with the great talents poor Tierney possessed, and the degree in which he was, all his life, actively engaged in party politics, he was not unmindful of his first and paramount duties to his Creator, and died a devout Christian."

The summer of 1831 deprived Lord Sidmouth of two of his earliest and most intimate friends — his brother-in-law, Mr. Bathurst, who died on the 15th of August, in the 78th year of his age, and Sir Benjamin Hobhouse. The former, in particular, was as much endeared to him by the ties of family connexion as by the yet more attaching bonds of early school and college recollections — by an intimacy and correspondence in after-life which was never interrupted, and by an entire and unchangeable sympathy of political principles and party feeling during their prolonged public career. Mr. Bathurst was a man of much and varied information, a sound judgment, and acute understanding; and — not to mention the confidence and high opinion of Lord Sidmouth himself — the anxiety which Mr. Pitt, Lord Grenville, Mr. Perceval, and Lord Liverpool, successively showed to introduce him into their cabinets, bears witness to his value as a sound counsellor, a ready and effective speaker in parliament, and an able and diligent transactor of official business. Mr. Bathurst had fought all the battles of the constitution side by side with his relative and friend, until the concession of the Roman Catholic claims, previous to which occurrence he had wholly retired from public life; but he partook in all

his brother-in-law's feelings on that occasion, as he also did with respect to the Reform Bill, to which subject, indeed, his last letter to Lord Sidmouth, dated May 24th, 1831, only two months prior to his decease, principally related. On this distressing occasion his Lordship opened his heart to Lord Exmouth on the 19th August, in the following expressions: — "You will have heard, with regret, of the sad event at Lydney, and in that regret Sir William Grant, I am sure, will participate. It has closed a friendship which, during a period of sixty-two years, never experienced a moment's interruption. Full justice is done to my lamented friend by his neighbours of all classes and descriptions. He was the referee in their differences, the adviser in their difficulties, the benefactor in their distresses. The trials to which I have lately been subjected have not, I trust, been lost upon me.

'Still drops some leaf from withering life away.'"

The year 1832 brought, also, its bereavements, and those of the most afflicting kind. On the 30th of April his Lordship received information of the death, on the preceding evening, of the good and venerable Bishop Huntingford, which intelligence he communicated to his son-in-law in the terms subjoined: — "You will have heard that I have lost my oldest, earliest, and dearest friend. Of my intimate school acquaintances one only remains—Pole Carew—and he is in a tottering state. These are serious, and, I trust, salutary, but not disheartening, admonitions." The piety, integrity, disinterestedness, and simplicity of the bishop's character; his classical enthusiasm,

and his devoted attachment to Lord Sidmouth — all these qualities, it is hoped, have been fully exhibited in the progress of this work. The good bishop to the last was influenced by his "two favourite maxims, which," as he told Lord Sidmouth not long before, "were in daily application," namely, "few evils are so great but that they might be greater;" and, "under every suffering may be found some source of consolation, if the mind will but look for it." The good prelate's last letter to his friend was dated only three weeks before his death. It was written under considerable anxiety respecting the Reform Bill, then at its highest stage of excitement, and recited with much approbation the following remark of Dr. Johnson: —

"No man is more an enemy to public peace than he who fills weak heads with imaginary claims, and breaks the series of civil subordination by inciting the lower classes of mankind to encroach upon the higher." The duration and nature of the intercourse between these friends, and Lord Sidmouth's unabated affection for his early instructor, are, perhaps, sufficiently expressed in the following extracts from two of his Lordship's later letters to the bishop: —"For the last fortnight I have occasionally enjoyed a very high treat — that of reading over letters from near relatives and intimate friends, which I received between the years 1770 and 1790. Of these, your letters and those of my father are the most numerous, and the most valuable. I deeply feel that their main purpose has been incompletely answered; but I am sure that they have been useful to me throughout my life. They shall be arranged and left as a treasure, and, I

trust, a benefit to my children's children." The next extract was written only a short time before their final separation:—"I am now in my 75th year: God grant that I may 'grow wiser and better as my strength wears away.' Sixty-three years have elapsed since you first impressed me with those feelings towards you which have accompanied me through life, and which, whilst life lasts, will remain fixed in the heart of your affectionate friend, S."

The year 1832 did not pass away without depriving Lord Sidmouth of another valued friend, in Vice-Admiral the Honourable Sir Henry Blackwood, Bart., who was carried off suddenly by fever on the 13th of December, aged sixty-three years, fifty-one of which he had spent in the active service of his country. Lord Sidmouth's partiality for the naval heroes of England has frequently been mentioned; and Sir Henry was one of that gallant band whom his Lordship had for many years admitted to his intimacy, as a frequent visiter and correspondent. Sir Henry's services, especially on the memorable 21st of October, 1805, would, doubtless, have drawn his Lordship's heart towards him, had not the friendship been previously completed by the union of the former with Miss Gore, who had been in habits of intimacy with Lord Sidmouth and his family from her earliest years. From that period their intercourse remained frequent and uninterrupted; and his Lordship must have deeply felt the void occasioned by the loss of his warm-hearted friend's animated and interesting converse. Lord Sidmouth was frequently consulted respecting the delineation of character inscribed upon Sir Henry's monument in Westminster Abbey, in which it was

stated, that with his high professional qualities "was combined a strong sense of religion, and that his energy, promptitude, and valour derived additional lustre from the virtues which adorned his personal character."

The 23d of January, 1833, took from Lord Sidmouth another naval friend, bound to him by the strongest ties of mutual affection, Admiral Lord Exmouth, who, during a prolonged and painful illness, had exercised the qualities of fortitude, resignation, humility, and composure, to an extent which clearly denoted the predominance of Christian motives and expectations over all earthly ties, and all temporal considerations. Lord Sidmouth's just appreciation of the qualities which distinguished the deceased may best be ascertained by reference to his letters on the painful subject. The first extract was addressed on the 24th of November to his son-in-law, in reply to a communication stating that all hope of ultimate recovery was now abandoned:—"Your letter has brought before us a most affecting, and, I trust, instructive representation of the tranquil and pious close of a most useful and exemplary life. It is gratifying to know that justice is done to your beloved father on this side the grave; and to be assured that his name will long be remembered and held in respect. It must be soothing to his mind to be surrounded by a most affectionate and grateful family, as it must be to them to be at his bed-side, 'assidere deficienti, satiari vultu, amplexu.' If a few words could be conveyed from me to the ear of my friend, it would be to express my fervent but humble hope that a friendship which, during a long period in this

world, has been warm, constant, and uninterrupted, may be renewed and perpetuated in another state of existence."

Writing not long afterwards to Lord De Dunstanville, his Lordship alluded to the melancholy scene at Teignmouth in the following terms:—"All the accounts of our poor friend are most interesting: he has suffered much, but his patience has never forsaken him; and he perfected, on his death-bed, the example which he set to his family during a long, virtuous, and honourable life. We, my dear Lord, shall deeply deplore his loss; but the share we have had in his intimacy will ever be a subject of pride and delightful recollection to both of us."

In the succeeding July Lord Sidmouth, in common with the whole civilised portion of the human family, lamented the death of Mr. Wilberforce, whom, in his letter of condolence to the Reverend Henry William Wilberforce, he truly styled "a shining light to his country and to the world." His Lordship was one of the earliest of that body of friends and admirers who signed the requisition to the family, proposing that the funeral should take place publicly in Westminster Abbey; and he much regretted that an accidental misdirection prevented his receiving the reply in time to admit of his attendance at that mournful ceremony. He also seconded a resolution, at the meeting held on the 22d of August, for the purpose of originating some public testimonial in honour of the deceased philanthropist.

The two succeeding years were equally productive of solemn and approximate warnings. In March, 1834, and January, 1835, to the death, in the former

year, of his early associate and, subsequently, in public life, his alternate ally and opponent, Lord Grenville*, were added those of two justly-appreciated friends — one the only surviving companion of his schoolday recreations, and both the constant participators in his political proceedings and opinions, the Right Honourable Charles Yorke, and the Right Honourable R. Pole Carew.

The year 1835 still further reduced the rapidly diminishing number of Lord Sidmouth's friends; and in addition to Lord De Dunstanville, Mr. Bankes, and other intimates yet remaining from the older generation, he had to lament the untimely death of Lady Sidmouth's only brother, the Honourable William Scott, who expired on the 26th of November, leaving his venerable father without descendants to inherit his nobly acquired honours. Lord Stowell himself, worn down by time and infirmities, quickly followed his son to the grave. He died on the 28th of January, 1836, having completed his 90th year on the 28th of the preceding October. His Lordship's case was no exception to the remark which has pronounced lawyers not to be always the best managers of their own concerns; for, when preparing his will, he had not contemplated the possibility of his surviving his son, and, consequently, had made no provision for such contingency. His daughter was perfectly aware how essential to her interests a re-arrangement of her father's affairs would prove under these circumstances; but such was her disinterestedness, and that of Lord

* Lord Sidmouth informed his son-in-law, on Lord Grenville's death, that "George III. and Lord Grenville had both, separately, told him that they knew who was the author of Junius, and that he thought it probable some disclosure would now be made."

Sidmouth, that their only anxiety was to keep the parent in ignorance of the death of his son, and thus spare him the pang which the bereavement would have occasioned him; and in this pious object they fortunately succeeded.* Lord and Lady Sidmouth's first step on coming into possession of Lord Stowell's fortune was immediately to relinquish — the former the pension of 3000*l.* per annum for life granted him by his Majesty George the Fourth, on his retirement from office in 1822; and the latter the jointure which she derived from the family of her first husband. The circumstances attending the resignation of the pension, which King William the Fourth said "was just what he should have expected from a man whose life had been one of consistency throughout," are fully explained in the following extract from a Treasury minute, dated 19th of February, 1836: —

"The Viscount Melbourne lays before the Board a letter which he has received from the Viscount Sidmouth, dated Richmond Park, 15th February, 1836, requesting the favour of his Lordship to lay before the King, with his (Lord Sidmouth's) humble duty, his resignation of the pension of 3000*l.* granted to him by his late most gracious Majesty, King George IV.†

* By a further exercise of her liberality, Lady Sidmouth founded a scholarship, termed the Stowell scholarship, in the University of Oxford for the encouragement of the study of civil law, and endowed it with the interest of 4000*l.* sterling. She also, in conjunction with her husband, presented four acres of valuable building land in the town of Reading for the site of the new Berkshire hospital.

† This letter Lord Melbourne acknowledged in the following terms of courteous approbation: —

"My Lord, Downing Street, February 17th, 1836.

"I have the honour of acknowledging your Lordship's letter of the 15th instant, which I will lose no time in laying before his

"My Lords direct that the charge for the pension of 3000*l.* granted to the Viscount Sidmouth be discontinued in future.

"Acquaint Lord Sidmouth, that my Lords cannot give directions to carry into effect his Lordship's resignation of the pension granted to him for his official services, without at the same time expressing their sense of the public spirit and disinterestedness which have induced his Lordship to abandon his vested right in a pension secured by Act of Parliament, and thus diminishing the charge upon the resources of the country.

"F. BARING."

Mr. Spring Rice, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in communicating this circumstance to the House of Commons, observed that he "thought Lord Sidmouth entitled to the thanks of the House and of the public for the example he had set; and Mr. Hume declared himself "of the same opinion, and hoped that others who could afford to resign their pension would do likewise." His Lordship's own sentiments on the subject are comprised in the following observations, addressed to his son-in-law:—"Thanks, my dear George, for your letter: your opinion and that of dear Fanny on the resignation of my pension is very satisfactory. This step was the result of thorough consideration; and adverse as it was to the opinion of all those to whom I mentioned the subject, I felt it to be necessary for the ease and comfort of my own mind."

Majesty. I beg leave to assure your Lordship that I fully appreciate, as it deserves, the generous and patriotic conduct which you have so promptly held upon the present occasion, and I remain, my Lord, with great respect,

"Your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant,

"MELBOURNE.

"The Viscount Sidmouth."

Lord Sidmouth's few remaining friends were now falling rapidly around him; and his venerable father-in-law's demise was followed, on the 28th of May, by that of the Duke of Gordon, a man truly endeared to his friends by the affectionate warmth and noble generosity of his nature. It was his Grace's annual practice to send Lord Sidmouth some little memento, accompanied by a note of cordial greeting. The happy manner in which these effusions of the heart were expressed, and the genuine marks contained in them of real sympathy and feeling, insured their careful preservation amongst Lord Sidmouth's most valued MS. treasures: one of them has already been introduced into this work. In the hope, however, that the reader will coincide in his Lordship's estimation of them, two others will now be presented for his perusal. The first is dated —

"My dear Lord Sidmouth, Dover, May 4th, 1822.

"As I had not the good fortune to find you at home when I called, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of requesting you will accept my sincere and best thanks for all your kindnesses to me, of which I shall ever retain a grateful remembrance. Happy, indeed, should I be, if, at any period of my life, I could make any sort of return to you for so many acts of goodness as I have experienced; or prove how much respect, esteem, and attachment I feel towards you; and the interest I shall ever have in the welfare of yourself and your family. God bless you, and believe me ever your sincere friend,

"HUNTLEY."

The second is selected from a later part of the series: —

"Gordon Castle, Jan. 1st, 1833.

"My very dear Sidmouth,

"At this season, when the mind naturally surveys the events of the past year, and we cast our kindest thoughts on

our friends, there is no one to whom my heart turns with more affection than to you. God grant that you and Lady Sidmouth, as well as those around you, may long enjoy His choicest blessings; and, as you advance in the journey, may be cheered by the distant beams of that brighter sun which can alone render the lot of life, even in its most enviable condition, truly desirable. Remember us to your good Lady and daughters; and be assured, till the last, I shall remain,

"Your affectionate friend,

"GORDON."

The progress and result of his Grace's last illness, which occurred in London, and was of brief duration, were communicated daily to Lord Sidmouth by their mutual intimate, Mr. Pearse, a man of congenial friendliness of heart. The note which conveyed the fatal intelligence is dated "Craig's Court, Saturday, May 28th," and contains the following passages: — "Alas! my dear Lord, the scene is closed. The poor Duke died this morning without any bodily suffering —in this respect to the consolation of those about him, his strength being entirely expended. * * * Thus has passed from this world of troubles one of the best men that ever lived; in his noble character, or in the warmth of his friendships, without parallel. The loss to the admirable Duchess will render her whole remaining life one of deep sorrow. To his many friends — your Lordship distinguished amongst them — and to myself, so ardently attached to him as I have been, his loss will be irreparable, and can never entirely depart from our memories for the short remainder of our days. The dear Duke possessed a heart, in all its applications, which is rarely to be found."

A melancholy interest attaches to the above letter, inasmuch as it forms a suitable introduction to the

death of the warm-hearted writer himself, who only survived his noble friend until the 21st of the following July. Lord Sidmouth felt both these losses very deeply.

On the 20th of June, 1837, the British empire was deprived of that truly benevolent and patriotic monarch King William IV. It will not be doubted that Lord Sidmouth participated most deeply in the general sorrow produced by this national bereavement: but as his state of health would not permit him to take any active part on the occasion, it is only necessary to add, that through life his Lordship had always experienced from his Majesty the most kind, gracious, and condescending treatment; and that he regarded his Majesty with affectionate veneration, as well for his own attractive qualities, as for his royal father's sake.

Lord Sidmouth shortly afterwards encountered another shock in the death of Lord Eldon, who closed his highly distinguished and valuable career on the 13th of January, 1838, in the 87th year of his age. The character of this eminent lawyer and statesman has been elsewhere so fully and ably delineated, that it is only necessary to mention now the affectionate attachment and perfect accordance on almost every subject, either of public or private interest, which had long subsisted between his Lordship and Lord Sidmouth, especially since the year 1807. This sympathy was further strengthened in 1823 by the marriage of the latter to Lord Eldon's beloved niece — the daughter of his favourite brother — from the date of which event Lord Sidmouth was regarded by both those extraordinary men quite as one of themselves.

In the year 1840 his Lordship lost his "old and excellent friend Marquis Camden"—an event which, as he remarked to his son-in-law, "constituted another awful, and, he trusted, salutary admonition."

Two years afterwards, on the 3d of June, 1842, he had to lament the death of Lord Rolle, the only remaining friend of his boyish days. Lord Rolle and his Lordship had known each other as neighbours in Devonshire from their early youth; and this circumstance, together with the entire accordance of their political views, naturally led to a close intimacy and friendly correspondence, which remained uninterrupted to the close of life. Lord Rolle was highly respected in his native county—which he long represented in parliament—for his loyal and fearless conservatism and munificent generosity. He took a prominent and manly part in the House of Commons on many of the most agitating questions of the close of the last century, especially on Mr. Fox's India bill, the regency question, and the war of the revolution, as a zealous supporter of Mr. Pitt; and thus often rendered himself obnoxious to the Opposition party.

On the 26th of September, in the same year, Lord Sidmouth was deprived of his last remaining college friend, by the death of Marquis Wellesley, in the 83d year of his age. After the Marquis's retirement from public life, he had resided, first at Fulham, and then at Kingston House, Knightsbridge; and this approximation afforded facilities for the renewal of early intimacy, of which the friends gladly took advantage. A frequent epistolary intercourse consequently arose, which has afforded the following picture of the green

and vigorous state of Lord Wellesley's mind and spirits at that advanced period of his life.

"Kingston House, February 19th, 1840.

"My dear Lord Sidmouth,

"I am deeply sensible of the kindness of your inquiries: I have suffered a great deal of inconvenience, but they tell me my complaint is not dangerous. I am not, however, so infirm of mind as to be unprepared for a call; and in this, I know, I agree with you, as on most other subjects, for *sixty-one years*, our first meeting being in the theatre, at Oxford, in July, 1779. Thank my God, He has granted me the use of all my faculties to this hour, when they are all not only as perfect (especially memory) as they ever were, but even more so. This is a resource to me which sheds balm over every infirmity of the body. The other day I quoted the old verses to my brother Arthur,

'My mind to me a kingdom is;'

and it is strictly truth; for the vivacity of my mind (by the grace of its Maker) supplies me with new life and spirit every hour. * * * I am grieved to hear that you have not been well; but I trust your complaints are not greater than mine; and that we shall meet again, and *see* one another whenever the light of day shall shine on this quarter of the world."

Not long afterwards Lord Sidmouth received from the Marquis a presentation copy of his "Primitiæ et Reliquiæ," accompanied by the following note:—

"Kingston House, March 14th, 1840.

"My sleepless nights have obliged me to call for relief on the nine old ladies whom we have so often visited together in the olden time. * * * I now send you a little book of trifles which the importunity of various friends, especially Brougham, has induced me to collect for private use. It may amuse you for half an hour. * * * There is a dedi-

cation to Brougham, who is the author of the printing, although not of the work. It contains a high but just panegyric on his eloquence. He has an excellent heart and an admirable temper, and his knowledge is boundless; and he has my and your enthusiasm for Homer, Demosthenes, and Virgil." * * *

"Aug. 23d, 1840.

"I am very sorry to have missed the opportunity of seeing you yesterday; but I am obliged to dine regularly at an early hour, and you happened to call just as I had sat down to dinner * * * Under the favour of Providence I continue to gain strength and health. What think you of the French war, and of our Irish rupture of the Union? I now renounce the Catholic cause.

"Ever yours, most affectionately,

"WELLESLEY."

The two last communications which Lord Sidmouth ever received from Lord Wellesley, are dated respectively, June the 11th and July the 2d, 1841, and relate principally to a change which had recently taken place in the Marquis's views of public affairs, which led him to follow the political course of his brother the Duke of Wellington.

"I am going on well," his Lordship wrote on the former day, "as my medical advisers inform me, but I think the weather greatly retards my recovery. I rejoice more and more every hour in my political course, which I find is generally approved. God grant that the great cause may prosper, of which I will not despair." "The elections," he observes in the second note, "engross all attention. I think their course is favourable, but not so much so as I expected, nor, I fear, as the crisis demands. Ireland, in some parts, is absolutely in a state of civil

war. On the whole, the state of affairs is tremendous."

The progress of Lord Sidmouth's serene and protracted old age had now, as regarded the earliest intimates of his youth, left him altogether alone, and he stood amongst his loving and admiring descendants of the present peaceful generation, a venerable memorial of the anxious times and astounding scenes he had witnessed — like some ancient tower surrounded by modern habitations. Nor were these timely and merciful warnings of a gracious Providence bestowed upon him in vain. Several years before, he had expressed to his daughter an "anxiety to be at home and in winter-quarters, when he should proceed at once and in earnest, to set his house in order" — and this work he had evidently engaged in with all diligence; for whilst the love of his country remained unabated, and he continued to manifest towards those around him that affectionate interest, that active benevolence, that unchangeable complacency, which adorned his character no less at the close of his career than throughout its progress, still it was evident from the delight he took in the solitude and silence of his chamber, that he was even now in communion with another world — to which, indeed, from his venerable appearance, his talk of those who were gone, and the conquest he had achieved over human passions and feelings, he might almost have been regarded as already belonging. Even the study in which he spent his hours of meditation was a memorial of scenes past, a foretaste, he humbly trusted, of scenes to come — being covered with the portraits of lost friends: and there it was that about this

period, he held the conversation with Miss Halsted (then a guest in his house), which her faithful pen has thus recorded. "Here you find me" — he said to the lady, who had surprised him communing, in idea, with the spirits of the departed great, and wise, and brave, and eloquent, whose lifeless similitudes hung beside him — "here you find me surrounded by my early friends and valued contemporaries. There is the Bishop of Hereford, my first tutor at Winchester College, whose correspondence I enjoyed until he was removed from the earth — there hangs Lord Ellenborough — there Lord Stowell — Pitt — Perceval — Lord Nelson — Lord Hood — Lord Exmouth — Windham — Sir William Grant, and many other faces and names which can never be obliterated from my mind. 'That your administration may be the most glorious in the pages of our history' (pointing to the portrait of Nelson), 'is the earnest prayer, and shall be the unceasing endeavour of your affectionate friend Nelson.' He paused a moment. 'But they are all gone — all passed away except myself.' Here he looked up with one of those placid smiles which once seen could never be forgotten. 'And I too shall soon be remembered but in name, and deeds that, God be praised, I can dwell on with a clear conscience and a tranquil mind. I am not aware of having ever wilfully injured or given pain to any human being. When compelled by my position to do so, my own inclinations were deeply probed, but I never allowed my personal feelings to be placed in comparison with my duty to my country and my sovereign.' Then taking up a book of sacred poetry which a tenderly beloved grand-daughter, recently deceased, had be-

queathed to him, and holding it open at the page on which her name had been inscribed, he added—'Who could have thought I should have survived that dear child?' Here his affections seemed quite to overpower him, and it became evident that the venerable mourner desired to be left to commune alone with thoughts which had become too trying for utterance."

Before, however, this man of other times was gathered in "like a shock of corn in his season," he had yet a separation to undergo, the heaviest, indeed, that could now have befallen him, in the death of her who for nearly nineteen years had been his affectionate companion and confidant, the solace of his retirement, the delight of his social hours, the friend and benefactress of his family. Lady Sidmouth, from her suffering and declining state of health, had long been the object of her lord's tenderest solicitude; and it was a frequent occasion of regret to them both, that from the effects of old age on one hand, and of indisposition on the other, they could not contribute as much as they desired to each other's comfort and alleviation. In the spring of 1842 the obviously fatal tendency of Lady Sidmouth's case was accelerated by an attack of influenza, to which, after a struggle of ten days, her shattered constitution yielded on the evening of the 26th of April. She was perfectly conscious of her danger, and showed the most beautiful composure, giving minute directions to those around her as to the execution of her wishes after her decease. She also, on the day of her release, received the blessed sacrament, with her husband, his eldest daughter, and her own beloved friend Mrs. Gaskell, at the hands of Archdeacon

Lyall; and when the moment of the sun's setting approached, she desired her curtain might be drawn up that she might fix her eyes for the last time on that glorious luminary.*

Nothing could be more striking than Lord Sidmouth's chastened and resigned sorrow under this affliction. It was that of one who knew the separation must be short; that the hour of his own departure drew near. The most pleasing and earnest of his remaining occupations consisted in fulfilling, to the letter, the will and purposes of the deceased; and when it was found that, in the exercise of her generosity, she had bequeathed a larger aggregate sum than she had at her disposal, he insisted on supplying the deficiency from his private funds. One of her Ladyship's favourite objects, in which he took a deep interest, and which he just lived to see completed, was the erection of a new church at Early, towards which he contributed three acres of land for the site, in addition to a donation of 500*l.* His Lordship derived, undoubtedly, much relief from the fulfilment

* The great bulk of Lord Stowell's property passed away at her Ladyship's decease; but of the comparatively small portion which was placed at her disposal at the time of her first marriage, she made a very righteous and considerate distribution—remembering with great liberality the members of her husband's family, together with many other friends. Nor, whilst thus beneficent to individuals, was she indifferent to the claims of Christian charity; for she left 2000*l.* to the new Berkshire hospital, 1250*l.* towards the endowment of a new church in the hamlet of Early, and parish of Sunning, and 7000*l.* for distribution amongst public charities in connexion with the church, at the discretion of her valued friend Archdeacon Lyall. Her Ladyship was buried in the family vault in Sunning church, beside the remains of her father, mother, and brother.

of these pious duties; but his best consolation under his bereavement consisted in the humble but assured hope expressed in the following prayer, which he composed at this time for his private use: —

"I acknowledge, O Lord! with devout humility, the blessed influence of thy grace upon my beloved wife throughout her exemplary life, and which imparted to the close of it, through thy mercy, an earnest and a foretaste of eternal happiness. Vouchsafe, O Lord! if it be thy good pleasure, to bestow on me the same assistance of thy grace, to enable me to know and to feel as I ought, and repent me truly of my past sins and transgressions, and so to conduct myself, during the remaining period of my mortal existence, as to render me not altogether unworthy, at the close of it, through thy grace and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord, of being made a partaker, with her and those most dear to me, of a blessed immortality. Amen."

Lord Sidmouth had now reached that period when he must have felt that the only source of happiness remaining for him in this world consisted in the belief that there was another and a happier state beyond, where those who had gone before him were awaiting his arrival. The blessings of life, as far as it was good for him to possess them, he *had* enjoyed; its duties he *had* fulfilled. His house, also, he had long set in order; and in the happy marriages of his two younger daughters in the year 1838, he had seen his family arrangements finally disposed of and completed.* All that remained, therefore, was to set a good example of Christian resignation to those around him, by awaiting, in a frame of mind equally removed from presumptuous eagerness and timid reluctance,

* The elder of these two ladies was married to the Rev. Horace Currie, and the younger to Thomas Barker Wall, Esq.

the hour of his Master's coming; wisely preparing meanwhile for his departure, by detaching himself, as far as possible, from earthly cares and interruptions. With this view, in July, 1842, he resigned into the hands of the Dean and Chapter the honourable office of High Steward of Westminster, to which he had been appointed by them above twenty years before; and it was with difficulty that he was dissuaded, even by the gracious solicitation of the ranger, his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, from also relinquishing the deputy-rangership of the royal park in which he resided. His annual visit to his Devonshire estates, from which, with his family, he used to derive so much gratification, he discontinued after the year 1838, finding the round of visits which the tour entailed upon him, however gratifying to his feelings, too exciting for his health and spirits. Until 1841 his Lordship used frequently, for short periods, to inhabit Lady Sidmouth's favourite retirement, Early Court; but whilst residing there in the autumn of that year, he experienced a severe attack of inflammation of the chest, from which he was with difficulty relieved by the skilful treatment of Dr. Smith, and from that time it was deemed advisable that he should reside altogether at Richmond Park. It was at this last place that in the summer of the same year some slight indications of paralysis appeared; but severer symptoms were providentially averted by the prompt and judicious measures resorted to by Dr. Julius. The seizure, however, had permanently affected the optic nerve; and although he continued to write with some difficulty until July, 1842, which is the date of the last autograph letter he addressed

to his son-in-law, yet he attributed to that attack his inability to read, even with the assistance of glasses. This new affliction, and the resigned and contented spirit in which he received it, we find thus described in notes which he addressed to his second daughter.

"Feb. 3d, 1842.

"During the letter-writing part of the day I am a poor creature, languid and somnolent. My eyes, too, are failing, and, I fear, will not last much longer. Yet I have abundant cause for gratitude; and I hope that I feel it as I ought."

"Feb. 15th.

"My sight is now failing rapidly. The power of reading is all but gone; but, thank God, I suffer no pain, and have, in fact, no ailment or infirmity that I ought to complain of."

Of this same cheerful character also was the general tone of his conversation. "I have several ailments," he used to say to those around him, "but no complaints." Providentially, his cheerful submission to the diminution in the powers of sight was not further tested, as his vision did not wholly fail him to the last. His placid frame of mind readily accommodated itself to his being read to, and in that manner, in addition to his daily portions from Scripture and the liturgy, he was enabled to pursue a regular course of historical and other interesting and improving studies. From this it will be understood that, although his spirit was chiefly directed towards another world, he never was so gloomily alienated from the present one as not to manifest a tender and unceasing concern for the welfare of his family, his friends, and, especially, his country. His anxiety on this latter subject was shown only the month before his decease, in a letter to Lord Bexley, requesting his Lordship

to hold his proxy; and, still more, during his last illness, in a conversation with his physician, to whom he declared that he ought to feel better in consequence of "three cordials"—meaning three pieces of favourable intelligence of a political nature which had been communicated to him that morning through the journals.

Now, whatever may be thought of this trait of character, it emanated, in Lord Sidmouth, from the purest love of his country and mankind. It was the patriotism of a Christian and a philanthropist, and, as such, it revived the panegyric of Pope on Lord Cobham:—

> "And you, brave Cobham, to the latest breath,
> Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death:
> Such in *those* moments as in all the past,
> Oh! save my country, Heav'n, shall be your last."

With Lord Sidmouth, indeed, patriotism was the concentration of every manly virtue, and every Christian grace. It regulated the course of his official career; it guided his footsteps through the vale of years and of retirement, and it even shed a momentary radiance upon the closing scenes of his life. Thus tranquil and resigned, willing to remain, yet praying to depart and be with Christ, this venerable man expected the summons for his departure. It was a goodly sight to behold him, with his white and flowing hair, his countenance beaming with benevolence, and his noble figure upright and tall as ever, yet tottering under the weight of years with almost infantine weakness, bid an early adieu to his family at the close of his cheerful and intellectual evening. There was a solemnity in his blessing, a tenderness in their leave-taking, an anxious watching of his

slowly-departing footsteps, which was truly impressive; every one feeling that it might be their last parting; all knowing that the final separation could not be very remote.

Having thus conducted his Lordship to the period at which his resigned and patient spirit was calmly awaiting that rest which remaineth for the people of God, advantage will be taken of the interval to offer some brief remarks, and to record a few remaining anecdotes and recollections of him, which may possibly assist the reader in forming a more correct estimate of his public and private character.

Greatness is a relative term; and whether the world will assign it to an individual must depend, not simply on intrinsic merit, but also on the peculiar circumstances of the period, and upon comparison with other eminent men. In a more settled and peaceful era, when there would naturally be fewer competitors for the distinction, Lord Sidmouth's claim to this appellation would have been strong indeed. But in those eventful times, and amidst such a constellation of wonderful men as was then above the horizon, the character which may be most safely claimed for his Lordship is that of a faithful, wise, vigilant, and intrepid minister. Not that the preceding pages do not present him to view as a statesman sage in council and vigorous in action, who throughout a prolonged public life performed more valuable services, and committed much fewer errors, than many of those who have enjoyed, for the moment, a higher reputation. But the characteristics of his conduct were better calculated to produce the sober and equable fruits of prudence, judgment, and reflection, than those sudden flashes of genius by which con-

temporary applause is chiefly attracted. He wanted also, or, at least, he did not exercise to a sufficient extent, the one quality by which, in a free country, attention may best be attracted—that of a commanding eloquence. He was a reasoner rather than an orator.

A desire, therefore, to remove the obscurity in which his Lordship's real merits and services have hitherto been enveloped has furnished the principal inducement to the present publication. It is hoped that the springs and motives of his policy being thus made known, and considered in connexion with the circumstances by which it was influenced, his conduct and principles will at length be appreciated as they deserve. It will then, it is presumed, be admitted, that one who could safely conduct the affairs of state at a moment when the political surface of the whole world was heaving in terrific commotion, and who afterwards preserved the domestic peace of the country under difficulties the most appalling, could have been no ordinary statesman; it will then be pronounced, that, although he may not have been the foremost in that group of public men which made the age in which he flourished for ever memorable, he still possessed many qualities of a very high order in themselves, and peculiarly suited to those perilous times, which enabled him to render most essential services to his country.

But whatever degree of merit may have belonged to Lord Sidmouth as a statesman, in treating of his personal character there can be no hesitation in assigning to him the possession of those qualifications which constitute the charm and ornament of private

life. His temper, reported to have been naturally warm, had been brought so habitually under the influence of self-control, that, during a close intimacy of twenty-four years, the author never in a single instance knew it to be unreasonably disturbed. The same equanimity governed all the sensibilities and affections of his mind. It restrained his every feeling—his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, his successes and disappointments, within the bounds of a Christian moderation, and preserved him ever calm, cheerful, and resigned—the delight, the pride, the instructor of all around him.* To the ambition of personal elevation and aggrandisement he was altogether a stranger: in all he did he was guided entirely by principle; and the only reward he ever desired for his services was the confidence and regard of his sovereign, the respect of good men, and the approbation of his own conscience.*

His fortitude was surprising. Nothing could shake his nerves: on the expected approach, and on the sudden and unforeseen appearance of danger, he was equally imperturbable. "He considered," he once said to his father, "that no one was fit to be a public man who cared a farthing whether he should die in

* "There are two qualities," his Lordship used to observe, "essentially requisite for success in public life—temper and courage. Lord Camden, when speaking to Lord Mansfield of the wonderful ability which Mr. Pitt displayed in the cabinet, observed —"He has, besides, a perfect command of temper." "That," Lord Mansfield interposed, "is *every thing*." "No," Lord Camden resumed, "it is not *every thing*, but *every thing* else is nothing without it."

† One of his later remarks was, that "at his age it struck him very much, what little proportion there is between man's ambition and the shortness of his life."

his bed or on a scaffold;" and on the principle thus early laid down he consistently acted. The general rule of his life was — unbending firmness of purpose, and a tenacious adherence to what he considered right, tempered by the utmost gentleness, moderation, and indulgence towards individuals — an indulgence which extended even to their errors and imperfections — one of his favourite maxims being, that "it was a very important part of wisdom to know what to overlook." He had been much impressed with a remark made to him by King George III. — "Give me the man who judges *one* human being with severity, and every other with indulgence;" and once on repeating this to a friend, he added, that "he had endeavoured to make it his own rule, and wished he had succeeded more perfectly." This benevolent disposition rendered him on all occasions, apart from public duty, one of the most placable, forbearing, and patient of men: it led him also to exercise towards all a generosity of the most expanded nature, far surpassing the bounds which prudence usually prescribes; and it created in him a confiding disposition — a desire to believe well, and a reluctance to think ill, of his fellow-creatures — most unusual in old age, and still more remarkable in one who must have seen so much of what was evil.

His unbending adherence to the principles and opinions with which he set out in life resembled that of his royal master, and was remarkable, even in those times when unchangeableness was more easily practised than it is at present. Of those who encountered, with him, the political storms of the revolutionary war, few succeeded so well in maintaining

an undeviating and consistent course. It was an unwillingness — amounting in him almost to impossibility — to deviate from any favourite principle of action which somewhat accelerated his final retirement from public life, and which would, probably, have produced the same result, even if his taking that step had not been so fully justified by his advancing years. Hence his opinions on the Roman Catholic and other great questions of his day never underwent any material variation; and so far from approving of sudden and extensive alterations, even where some change might be desirable, the opinion he held was, that "where institutions had become defective, the rule of a statesman should be to *preserve* and *improve*." Yet, unchangeable as he himself was, he could make generous and liberal allowances for others. "I think it very uncharitable," he once said, "to condemn a man for expressing contrary opinions at different periods of his life, as we all know how continually new views of the same subject present themselves to the mind; and why should we blame others for *expressing* what we so often, ourselves, *feel?*" The principal modification observable in his opinions as he advanced in years is one which denotes his constantly expanding benevolence, and the increasing influence of Christian feelings. "I used," he said, when speaking of the wars in which England had been engaged during his time — "I used to think all the sufferings of war lost in its glory; now I consider all its glory lost in its sufferings. So one's feelings change."

He always evinced an aversion to the spurious liberality of the day; by which, in his opinion, right and wrong were too often confounded, and the soundest and most valuable principles surrendered. So

strong, indeed, was this dislike, that, in the eagerness of conversation on some much-controverted subject, he once said to a friend, "I hate liberality: nine times out of ten it is cowardice, and the tenth time it is want of principle." The same feeling extended to the strained humanity of the age, which, when carried to the full extent of the mawkish sentiment prevalent at the period, tended, he thought, frequently to divert sympathy from its legitimate objects — the deserving and unfortunate — and to concentrate it upon the criminal and unworthy. When enlarging upon this topic, he usually concluded his observations with the following quotation from the poetry of the Anti-jacobin: —

> "For the crush'd beetle first, the widow'd dove,
> And all the warbled sorrows of the grove;
> Next, for poor suffering guilt, and, last of all,
> For parents, friends, a king and country's fall."

His sanguine and cheerful perseverance under difficulties, and his determination never to despair, have been fully exhibited in the progress of this work. To make the best of every thing was with him a fixed principle of action. As he told the author, in April, 1835, "I have always fought under the standard of hope, and I never shall desert it." This, indeed, he regarded as a sacred duty; and, in fulfilment of it, he once ventured to express to Lord Eldon the regret he felt at hearing his Lordship say, in a moment of despondence, that "in ten years the prosperity of this country would be at an end, and there would be no sovereign on the throne of England." "When men of your weight and influence," he replied, "proclaim such sentiments, they suggest ideas to people

which would otherwise never have occurred." "I have known the British constitution long," he observed to another friend: "it has often been in danger, but it has always scrambled through it."

Another striking characteristic was his sacred regard for truth, which he not only recommended by precept, but also adhered to in his practice, with a consistency and strictness which the most rigid moralist might have envied. In his ideas of education, truth was the great lesson to be inculcated; its violation, the great offence to be dreaded and extirpated. Even the usual compliments and conventual excuses of society he could barely tolerate. It may easily be conceived, therefore, with what aversion he regarded the frequent party and political fabrications to which the perilous times in which he lived unhappily gave rise, and the still more numerous brood of exaggerations, mis-statements, or inventions, which fashion, scandal, and malice, were perpetually engendering. Whenever any rumour, disparaging or injurious to another, was reported to him, his almost invariable reply was, "I don't believe one word of it;" and it was quite remarkable how often his scepticism on such occasions proved, upon inquiry, to be well founded.

One particular, of which the reader can now scarcely require to be reminded, was the candid and charitable construction which his Lordship was ever disposed to place upon the conduct of his opponents. This trait the author has anxiously endeavoured to imitate, and happy will he be should he hereafter find that he has, in any measure, succeeded. If, however, it should appear that he has been unintentionally carried further

than was required by a due regard for historical truth, and that he has introduced into this work expressions or opinions which are calculated to inflict pain on any honest and honourable mind, he here desires to observe that it will prove to him a source of deep and lasting regret.

Probably the most attractive, certainly the most obvious, feature in this good man's character, was his universal benevolence and good-will, as he exercised it towards all men, and especially towards his family, his kindred, and his friends, in instilling wise and beneficial advice. The judicious and attractive manner in which, on those occasions, his experience conveyed its useful and impressive lessons may, perhaps, be best illustrated by the production of a few instances. Of these, the first which will be presented is the reply he made on receiving the congratulations of his second daughter, on Christmas-day, 1836:—"All my wishes and prayers, dearest Fanny, are congenial to yours: may every returning year present to you and George, and all dear to you, a cheering prospect as well as a delightful retrospect. The latter, however, cannot be enjoyed without a consciousness that we have received blessings with gratitude, and met difficulties and trials with calmness and submission."

A second example of the careful interest with which he was wont to interlace his familiar letters with instructive matter is extracted from his reply to a dutiful and affectionate address of his five children on his 76th birth-day. After a warm expression of his thanks, he added, "Do not fail to bear in mind that I have entered my 76th year, and be not unprepared for the separation which must take place ere long;

and let it be our earnest and constant endeavour to obtain, through the mercy of God, a re-union blessed and everlasting." Of a similar character are the following sentiments, addressed to one of his children who had informed him of the death of a favourite servant:—"You have had a severe domestic trial, to which I trust you have not been unequal. To feel afflicting dispensations as it is natural and right that we should feel them, and to bear them as it is our duty to bear them, is to fulfil some of the most important purposes for which we are sent into the world."

To the same party, when suffering from misplaced and ill-requited confidence, he wrote as follows:—"I am very sorry for your domestic vexations; but what family is free from them in some way or other? May you be spared severer trials; though, if you should be so visited, I am convinced that you will bear them as becomes a pious and well-conditioned mind. This is the happy way to consider all events in human life: take the good, remember it, act upon it, and forget the evil." To a favourite youth, on his going to reside at Oxford, he gave the following advice:—"Be studious, without being gloomy; be social, without being dissipated. Take the straightforward path; let nothing interfere with your sense of duty, and your peace of mind will never be affected by the opinions of others concerning your motives of action." *

The patience, amounting almost to cheerfulness, with which he regarded the approach of old age, and the growing infirmities incidental to that state, it was impossible not to admire. He never complained; and when, on inquiries being put, he was obliged to

* Miss Bryan's Notes.

acknowledge the existence of pain or inconvenience, he usually qualified the admission, by alluding either to the facility with which the evil could be endured, or to the presence of some compensating advantage. The mere passing of his time without suffering he regarded as a blessing. "In youth," he used to say, "the absence of pleasure is pain; in old age, the absence of pain is pleasure."

The last point which will be introduced into this brief allusion to Lord Sidmouth's private character is his respect for religion. Of this, an instance will be selected from his correspondence with his steward, in Devonshire, who had forwarded an application to his Lordship from the incumbent of the parish for a small piece of land to render the vicarage more commodious: —"I shall readily afford Mr. ——— the accommodation he requires, since I consider it only my duty, as a landed proprietor in the village, to do all in my power to encourage the clergyman's residence amongst his parishioners." In these words, Lord Sidmouth has propounded an admirable example to the landed aristocracy throughout the kingdom; and, after his Lordship had thus acted, it will not surprise the reader to find the curate, upon the resignation of his charge, addressing him in the following terms: —

"On the eve of taking my final leave of this parish, after a residence of above 13 years, both gratitude and duty prompt me to thank your Lordship for numerous and uninterrupted kindnesses, which have greatly contributed to make my abode here comfortable and happy. As the parochial minister, I have ever felt that your Lordship's influence, invariably thrown into the same scale, has given a weight and authority, which, if any good has been effected through my ministry, must have considerably tended to increase it. It is not only

to your Lordship, but also to Lady Sidmouth and your family, that I feel deeply grateful for the ready and kind attention ever given to any suggestion relating to the poor, the sick, and the education of the young. * * *

"I remain, &c. &c.

"Upottery, Dec. 16th, 1833. "GEORGE T. SMITH."

It was after his dinner on the 3d of February, 1844, that the vigilant eye of Lord Sidmouth's eldest daughter observed in him some slight symptoms of cold, which, having increased in the course of the 4th, were on the following day pronounced, by Dr. Julius, to be those of influenza. For three or four days the disorder appeared to yield to the judicious treatment prescribed, but on the 10th it had again assumed a serious aspect, insomuch that, on the next morning, at the suggestion of Dr. Julius, Dr. Holland was called in. All human skill, however, was unavailing; and from the moment of this relapse the vital powers of the venerable patient, enfeebled by years, gradually yielded to the insidious malady. It was a great blessing that his last days were wholly unembittered by suffering, and that he was mercifully permitted to retain his faculties unimpaired to the end.

The poet of the lonely night-watches has observed, that —

> "The chamber where the good man meets his fate
> Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
> Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven;"

and since, from the commencement of the attack his Lordship clearly foresaw its fatal termination, full many a "lecture—silent, but of sovereign power"—did those twelve solemn days reveal, which, could it with propriety be disclosed, would prove a most in-

teresting and instructive warning. Two of his daughters were residing with him at this time: his son hastened to him at the first alarm, and his remaining children quickly followed. He repeatedly spoke of them in the tenderest manner. "I love all my children," he said, "all equally: they have been the happiness of my life, and when I am taken from them, I trust my countenance will bear the impress of a grateful smile." Again, on the following day, when speaking of the hourly expected arrival of two of his daughters and their husbands, he added, "Kind, dutiful, affectionate children all have been to me; and if I am permitted to attain to that happy state to which I humbly aspire, and am permitted to look down, how often shall I be with you, my children." In conversing with his family, he frequently alluded, in the calmest manner, and without the smallest reserve, to his approaching departure. Thus, on one occasion, in answer to his son-in-law Mr. Currie's inquiry, "How he felt?" he said, "Breaking up and breaking down, my dear Horace; but that gives me no disquietude." "You put your whole trust in the merits of your Saviour?" "I hope I may say I do." "This has not come upon you unawares, I think?" "No; I have had many warnings, and I look forward to be re-united, with all those I love, in a blessed immortality."

"On the morning of the fatal Thursday, February 15th, one of his sons-in-law went early to his chamber to relieve Dr. George Julius, who had sat up with him all night. The Dean found, at first, his Lordship's mind slightly wandering; but on repeating to him

from memory, and with the requisite alterations, the commendatory prayers from the Visitation Service, and Bishop Wilson's beautiful 'Litany for the Dying,' he had the satisfaction of observing the beloved patient recall his scattered thoughts, and, as he trusted, unite in his humble supplications."

The above brief particulars have been selected from a family record of those impressive and improving death-bed scenes. The remaining portion, though deeply interesting to relations and friends, is of too solemn a character for indiscriminate perusal, with the exception, perhaps, of the following sentence, which describes the moment of final separation: —

"All his children now knelt weeping around his bed. I held his right hand in mine, and once, when I wiped his brow, he faintly said, 'Who?' Day, his faithful attendant, replied, 'Miss Addington, my Lord.' He with difficulty articulated, 'Mary Anne,' and that was the last word he ever uttered. The breathing now gradually became fainter: the dear hand began to lose its vital warmth; and at 7 o'clock P.M., of Thursday, the 15th of February, with one or two deep sighs, the earthly tie was severed, and the pure and noble spirit soared into the blessed presence of its God."

"The first feeling of all our hearts was not sorrow, but deep reverence and humble gratitude. Our privileges had indeed been great in being permitted to associate so long with such a character, and to witness an old age vigorous in intellect and active in usefulness; warm in feelings and affections, yet serene in temper; and a death full of the hope of immortality

through faith in Him who is the resurrection and the life."*

* His Lordship's mortal remains were conveyed, on the 22d of February, amidst the tears of many, and the regrets of all, to the family vault at Mortlake, in the chancel of which church a simple mural tablet bears the following inscription to his memory, from the pen of Sir Robert Inglis:—

IN AN ADJACENT VAULT IS DEPOSITED THE BODY OF
THE RT. HON. HENRY ADDINGTON, VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH,
A STATESMAN, AND A CHRISTIAN:
A STATESMAN, THROUGH NEARLY HALF A CENTURY OF SERVICE
IN THE HIGHEST OFFICES OF ENGLAND—
FAITHFUL TO HIS SOVEREIGN, AND DEVOTED TO HIS COUNTRY:
AND A CHRISTIAN, EVEN FROM YOUTH TO EXTREME OLD AGE;
IN EVERY RELATION OF PUBLIC, SOCIAL, AND PRIVATE LIFE,
FAIR AND CONSISTENT IN RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE:
WHO HAVING LIVED IN CHARITY TOWARDS ALL MEN,
DIED IN CHEERFUL, THANKFUL SUBMISSION TO GOD,
PLACING ALL HIS HOPE IN THE LORD, HIS SAVIOUR.
HE WAS BORN MAY 30TH, 1757, AND DIED FEBRUARY 15TH, 1844.
HE MARRIED (1.) URSULA MARY, DAUGHTER AND CO-HEIRESS OF
LEONARD HAMMOND, ESQ.;
AND (2.) MARY ANNE, DAUGHTER AND HEIRESS OF
WILLIAM SCOTT LORD STOWELL.

APPENDIX

TO THE THIRD VOLUME.

I.

"My dear Sir, Manchester, April 6th, 1821, 10 at night.

"I HAVE been thinking on the scheme you had the goodness to mention to me; and as the objections which occur to me are of a very strong character, I am about to lay them before you more fully than our hasty conversation permitted. God knows I should be sufficiently diffident of my own opinion in most cases where it stands in opposition to those for whom I entertain so much respect, and to whom, in almost all other instances, I should be most willing to defer. But this is a matter in which my experience, as an author, who has been twenty years before the public, maintaining, during that long space, a much higher rank of popularity than he deserves, may entitle me to speak with some opportunities of knowledge to which few others can lay claim; and to be silent merely out of politeness, or false modesty, would, in the circumstances, be a folly if not a crime: — since it is obvious that the measure, if not eminently successful, would be a marked failure for malignant satire to fix his fangs upon, and that the noble purpose of the Sovereign would be made the means of heaping on all concerned ridicule, and calumny, and abuse. My personal feelings would naturally determine me against becoming a member of such an Association. These, however unwillingly, I might set aside; but convinced, as I am, that the scheme will be hurtful at once to the community of letters, and to the respect due to the Sovereign, my own feelings are out of the question, and it becomes only my duty to consider the measure as these are implicated. In the first

place, I think such an association entirely useless. If a man of any rank or station does any thing in the present day worthy of the patronage of the public, he is sure to obtain it. For such a work of genius as the plan proposes to remunerate with 100*l.*, any bookseller would give ten or twenty times that sum; and for the work of an author of any eminence 3000*l.* or 4000*l.* is a very common recompense. In short, a man may, according to his talents, make from 500*l.* a year to as many thousands, providing he employs those talents with prudence and diligence. With such rewards before them, men will not willingly contend for a much more petty prize, where failure would be a sort of dishonour, and where the honour acquired by success might be very doubtful. There is therefore really no occasion for encouraging, by a society, the competition of authors. The land is before them, and if they really have merit, they seldom fail to conquer their share of public applause and private profit.

"It will happen, no doubt, that either from the improvidence which sometimes attends genius, or from singularly adverse circumstances, or from some peculiar turn of temper, habits, or disposition, men of great genius and talent miss the tide of fortune and popularity, fall among the shallows, and make a bad voyage of it. It would highly become his Majesty, in the honourable zeal which he has evinced for the encouragement of literature in all its branches, to consider the cases of such individuals; but such cases are now-a-days extremely rare. I cannot, in my knowledge of letters, recollect more than two men whose merit is undeniable, while I am afraid their circumstances are narrow. I mean Coleridge and Maturin. To give either, or both of them, such relief as his Majesty's princely benevolence might judge fitting, would be an action well becoming his royal munificence, and of a piece with many other generous actions of the same kind. But I protest that (excepting perhaps Bloomfield, of whose circumstances I know little,) I do not remember any other of undisputed genius, who could gracefully accept 100*l.* a year, or to whom such a sum could be handsomely offered. That there would be

men enough to grasp at it, would be certain; but then they would be the very individuals whose mediocrity of genius and active cupidity of disposition would render them undeserving of the royal benevolence, or render the royal benevolence ridiculous if bestowed upon them.

"But the association is not merely unnecessary and useless; it will, if attempted, meet a grand and mortifying failure, and that from a great concurrence of reasons. In the first place, you propose (if I understand you rightly) to exclude ———, ———, ———, &c., for reasons moral or political. But allowing these reasons their full weight, how will the public look on an association for literary purposes, where such men, whose talents are undisputed, are either left out, or choose to stay out; or what weight would that society have on the public mind? Very little, I should think; while it would be liable to all the shots which malice, and wit mingled, could fire against it. But besides this, I think—(judging, however, only from my own feelings)—that few men who have acquired some reputation in literature, would choose to enrol themselves with the obscure pedants of universities and schools—men most respectable, doubtless, and useful in their own way—excellent judges of an obscure passage in a Greek author—understanding, perhaps, the value of a bottle of old port—connoisseurs in tobacco, and not wholly ignorant of the mystery of punch-making; but certainly a sort of persons whom I, for one, would never wish to sit with, as assessors of the fine arts. There are many men, and I know several myself, to whom this description does not apply. But for one who has lived all his life with gentlemen, and men of the world, to mingle his voice with men who have lived entirely out of the world, and whose opinions must be founded on principles so different from our own, would be no very pleasing situation. Besides, every man who has acquired any celebrity in letters would naturally feel that the object, or rather the natural consequence of such a society, would be to *average* talent, and that while he brought to the common stock all which he had of his own, he was, on the contrary, to take on his shoulders a portion of their lack of public credit. Now this

is what no one will consider as fair play; and I believe you will find it very difficult to recruit your honorary class on such conditions, with those names which you would be most desirous to have, and without which a national institution of the kind would be a jest.

"But we will suppose them all filled up, and assembled. By what rule of criticism are they to proceed in determining the merits of the candidates on whom they are to sit in judgment? The lake school have one way of judging — that of Scotland another — Gifford, Frere, Canning, &c. a third — and twenty others have as many besides. The vote would not be like that of the Institute; for in science, and even in painting and sculpture, there are conceded points, on which all men make a common stand. But in literature you will find twenty people entertaining as many different opinions upon that which is called taste, in proportion to their different temperaments, habits, and prejudices of education. They *could* only agree upon *one* rule of decision, and that would be to choose the pieces which were least *faulty*; for though literary men do not agree in their estimates of excellence, they coincide, in general, in condemning the same class of errors. But the poems, thus unexceptionable, belong in general to that very class of mediocrity, which neither gods, men, nor columns, not even the columns of a modern newspaper, are disposed to tolerate, and which are assuredly sufficiently common, without being placed under the special patronage of a society.

"As to the men who are to be stipendiaries of 100*l.* a year; on what decent footing can they, receiving a pension not more than is given to a man-servant in a large establishment, hold an open and fair front with the public, or with the other classes of the association? I declare they will only be regarded as the badged and ticketed almsmen of literature; and sooner than accept it, were I in a situation to need it, I would cut my right hand off, and beg for bread with my left — when I had thus given assurance that I could never again commit the sin of using a pen. How is it possible, I repeat, for those stipendiaries to hold any thing like a fair and open front with the patrons, or honorary

classes? and if you destroy equality, you debase all the generous pride of a young author.

"Besides, we are by habit and character an irritable race. Leave us at a distance from each other, and we may observe decorum; but force into one body a set of literary men, differing so widely in politics, in taste, in temper, and in manners — having no earthly thing in common except their general irritability of temper, and a black speck on their middle finger — what can be expected, but all sorts of quarrels, tracasseries, lampoons, libels, and duels? Fabricio's feast of the actors, in Gil Blas, would be a joke to it. It would give rise, supposing the whole association did not fall into general and silent contempt, to a sequence of ridiculous and contemptible feuds, the more despicable that those engaged in them were perhaps, some of them, men of genius.

"Lewis the Fourteenth, in his plenitude of power, failed to make the Academy respectable; nor did it ever produce any member who rose above mediocrity. Those of genius who were associated with it made their way at a late period, and rather because the Academy wanted them, than because they required any honours it could bestow. In England, such a monopoly of talent would be ten times more misplaced. We all know John Bull, and that, for mere contradiction's sake, he will overlook what is admirable, rather than admire upon any thing resembling compulsion. Every judgment of the proposed society would be the subject of a thousand wicked jests, merely because it appeared in shape of an *injunction*, which seemed to impose on the public a particular creed of taste; and a happy time would the patrons and honoraries have of it, betwixt the internal dissensions of the hive of wasps they had undertaken to manage, and the hooting and clamouring of the public out of doors.

"I have still to add, that this society, like some well-meant charitable associations, would go far to occasion the discontinuance of that private assistance which is so much more useful both to the individual and to the public. Let me speak a proud word for myself: I have not for several years, and even when money has been scarce with me, given less

than from 50*l.* to 100*l.* a-year to the aid of unfortunate men of literature in various ways. Your proposed society would relieve me of this burthen; but could it distribute the relief with such secrecy or attention to the feelings of those who receive it? There is no merit in my doing this, for I work up to it; that is, I labour some hours more, in order to gain the means of this charity, than I would do on my own account; and I know it is a common practice with many literary men to do the same—from the same very natural motive. But all this would fall if the matter were taken up by a privileged society; and the poor devil, in his necessity, would be sent there as naturally as you give a beggar a mendicity ticket.

"I was very sorry to hear you intimate that matters had gone so far in this affair as to render a retreat difficult. But be it ever so difficult, a timely retreat is better than a defeat; and what can be said, after all, save that the King had, in his eagerness to advance literature, listened to a plan which, upon mature examination, was found attended with too many objections to be carried into execution? The circumstances, so well known to a veteran hack of letters like myself, could not possibly occur to the sovereign, or those with whom he at first consulted. I would have his grace flow directly from himself, and his own knowledge, taste, and judgment, rather than through the interposition of any society. His Majesty's kindness, and the honourable and gratifying distinction of those who have cultivated letters with success, has been illustrated by very many examples, besides those conferred on one individual, who may justly say of the marks of royal favour, that they

'Were meant for *merit*, though they fell on *me*.'

If his Majesty should be pleased to relieve the wants of the two or three men of acknowledged talent who are subject to them; or if he would condescend to bestow small pensions on the wives and families of men early cut off in the career of letters, he would show his interest in literature, and, at the same time, his benevolence. The assistance of young persons in education (provided they are selected strictly with

a view to proper qualifications) is also a princely charity; and either, or all of these, might be gracefully and naturally substituted for the present plan. If a device could be fallen upon to diminish the quantity and improve the quality of our literature, it would have an admirable effect. But the present scheme would have exactly the contrary tendency. The number of persons who can paint a little, play a little music, or write indifferent verses, is infinite, in proportion to those who are masters of those faculties; and their daubing, scraping, and poetastering is, to say the least, a great nuisance to their friends and the public; and the misfortune is, that these pretenders never have tact enough to detect their own insufficiency. A man of genius is always doubtful of his best performances, because his expression does and must fall infinitely below his powers of conception; and what he is able to embody to the eye of the reader is far short of the vision he has had before his own. But the *moderés* in literature are teased with no such doubts, and are usually as completely satisfied with their own productions as all the rest of the world are bored by them. All such will thrust their efforts on the proposed adjudgers of the prizes (and who on earth would have patience to read or consider them?), while, from modesty or pride, real genius would stand aloof from competing with such opponents. Your invitation would have the effect of the witches' incantation —

'All ill come running in, all good keep out.'

I would, besides, call your attention to the extreme indelicacy of authors, practising the same art, sitting as judges on each other's performances — a task which, with all its unpopularity and odium, few would undertake who had the least capacity of performing it well.

"In a political point of view, the proposed plan is capable of being most grossly misrepresented. It would be no sooner announced than the Jacobin scribblers would hold it forth as an attempt on the part of the sovereign to blind and to enslave his people, by pensioning their men of letters, and attaching them personally to the crown. No matter how false and infamous such a calumny, it is

precisely the kind of charge which the public beast would swallow greedily; and, from that moment, the influence of any individual connected with that society, on the public mind, is gone for ever. Absolute independence is of all things most necessary to a public man, whether in politics or literature. To be useful to his king and country, he must not only be a free man, but he must stand aloof from every thing which can be represented or misrepresented as personal dependence. And the bounty of the crown also, when bestowed on men of letters, should be so given as to show that it was the reward of merit, not the boon given to a partisan. But I should never end were I to state the various objections which occur to the practicability and utility of the proposed association. I am sensible I have stated these very confusedly; but some excuse is due, considering I have just travelled two hundred miles without a moment's stop; yet, the matter being on my mind, that you should have all that the experience of my calling suggests, before you come to a final determination, therefore I write this before I sleep. I beg my best respects to Mrs. Villiers; I will have *Ilai tutti taiti** copied out for her whenever I get to Edinburgh, to which place you may have the goodness to address, should any part of my letter require answer or explanation. My kindest and best respects attend my Lord Clarendon; and believe me ever, &c. &c.

"WALTER SCOTT.

"To the Hon. John Villiers."

II.

SPEECH OF LORD SIDMOUTH ON THE CATHOLIC QUESTION, 1829.

"IT was not uncommon (he said) for persons not quite satisfied with their own conduct to resort to the expedient of inculpating that of others, in the hope and for the purpose of diverting attention from themselves. Whether this was the

* An ancient Scotch military air.

case with his noble friend who had just sat down could only be known to himself. He (Lord Sidmouth) had, however, no hesitation in declaring that nothing which he had ever heard in either House of parliament had so much astonished him as the speech which the noble Lord had delivered this day; but he would endeavour to confine his observations upon it to those parts which referred immediately to himself; and he would then avail himself of the present occasion to express his sentiments on the bill before the House.

"A period of more than ten years had elapsed since a highly respectable gentleman (Mr. Charles Grant) was appointed to the situation of Chief Secretary in Ireland; and for that appointment and its supposed consequences the noble Lord had been pleased to pronounce that he (Lord Sidmouth), as Home Secretary, was peculiarly responsible.

"Now, it was well known to the members of the government at that time, and it could not, as he conceived, be unknown to the noble Lord himself, that in that appointment he had no concern whatever. He was then in a state of great family distress, and was absent in the discharge of one of the most painful duties which it had ever been his lot to perform*; and, upon his return to his official business, he found that the urgency of the public service had led to the appointment in question. To say that he was not surprised and that he was not displeased at that appointment, would be untrue. His sentiments upon it were expressed to his noble and lamented friend (the Earl of Liverpool) then at the head of the government; they were known by his noble friend, Earl Talbot, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; they were also known to the right honourable gentleman himself. It was painful to him to have these declarations extorted from him; but when he was charged with having contributed, by that appointment, to produce the difficulties and evils of the present crisis, he was surely entitled to break through punctilio, as far as it could be done consistently with his public duty, and let the fact be known.

"He now came to the animadversions which the noble

* The funeral of his brother.

Lord had passed on his conduct when in Ireland. These were also perfectly new to him; and he thought it somewhat strange that, from the habits of official intercourse and of personal friendship in which he had long lived with the noble Lord, he should, after an interval of nearly eight years, now learn, for the first time, that there were parts of his conduct, when he was in Ireland, of which the noble Lord did not approve. The special object, however, of the noble Lord's displeasure, and which he has pronounced to be 'one of the causes to which the present dilemma is to be traced,' was the presentation, by the Roman Catholic bishops, of a congratulatory address to his Majesty upon his arrival in Ireland. Previous to his having the honour of accompanying his Majesty to Ireland, he was asked by a noble Lord (the late Lord Donoughmore) whether there could be any objection to such a presentation? On that point he consulted persons on whose judgment he could rely, and, amongst others, the late Earl of Liverpool. All were of opinion that it was not possible to refuse to receive such an address; but it was also stated that it could only be received from the Roman Catholic bishops in their episcopal, and not in their diocesan character. That they were bishops, as much so as the right reverend prelates now in that House, no doubt could be entertained; every man knew that a person who had received ordination under the Roman Catholic church, and had renounced the Roman Catholic religion, was entitled to act as a Protestant priest without a second ordination. It would also not be denied that if a Roman Catholic bishop were, upon his renunciation of the Roman Catholic faith, to be appointed to a bishopric by the sovereign of this country, a second consecration would not be necessary. That they were, then, bishops there was no doubt; and how was it possible to advise his Majesty not to receive a respectable body of men in the character which rightfully belonged to them? They did not come as bishops of this or that diocese; but they came as bishops, and as bishops they were received. But the noble Lord had also complained that the bishops attended in their 'paraphernalia.' Whether this was the case or not, he was unable to state; but if they did attend in their episcopal

dress, how could that be reasonably objected to? Besides, it must be recollected that, according to the practice of a century, the ministers of the three dissenting denominations — Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists — have enjoyed the privilege of presenting their addresses to the King, not in the closet where these Bishops were received, but to the King upon the throne.

"The next charge of the noble Lord refers to his Majesty's parting letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; which letter, he (Lord Sidmouth) had the honour to advise, as well as to sign. Now, he would appeal to his noble friend, the Marquis of Wellesley, who soon succeeded to that high situation, and who held it for some years, whether there was a single word in that letter which did or could induce his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects to hope for a change of system in Ireland? It had not the remotest reference to the Roman Catholic question. It merely recommended the cessation of personal animosities, and the cultivation and encouragement of that good-will and of those kindly feelings towards each other, amongst all descriptions of the community, which it was one of the main objects of his Majesty's visit to promote.

"There was one remark of the noble Lord, with reference to the bill before the House, upon which he wished to say a few words. The noble Lord seemed to think that we should act unfairly if, after having passed the bill for the suppression of the Roman Catholic Association, and having assured his Majesty, that, conformably to the recommendation from the throne at the opening of the session, we would take into our deliberate consideration the whole condition of Ireland, we should hesitate about agreeing to the second reading of this bill. Now, what he (Lord Sidmouth) complained of was, that we were called upon to support this bill without having had any opportunity of entering upon that consideration which his Majesty had recommended, and to which we had pledged ourselves in consequence of that recommendation. It was and must have been expected that such an opportunity would have been afforded us either in a select committee or in a committee of the whole House; and that full information would have been laid before us, upon which to form our judgment upon this momentous subject. But all the information

upon which we were now required to proceed, for it was evident we were to expect no more, was that contained in the speech of the noble Duke; and if it should happen that we were not satisfied with that information, and were of opinion that it did not warrant our proceeding to the second reading of the bill, was it unfair or disingenuous in those who entertained such an opinion, to vote against it? On the contrary, it was our duty so to act; to persevere, under such circumstances, in the course which we have hitherto pursued; and to avert, if possible, a great and permanent change in the Protestant constitution of our country, upon grounds which we deem insufficient and unsatisfactory.

"He thought it most improvident, and highly derogatory to the dignity of the crown, that, in the same speech which strongly recommended the suppression of the Roman Catholic Association as a body inconsistent with the spirit of the constitution and the preservation of public tranquillity, the prospect should have been held out and the expectation encouraged, that, as soon as a bill had passed for that purpose, all the points for which the Association had been formed should be conceded, and all its professed purposes accomplished. There was, surely, another and far more becoming course which might have been pursued: first, to put down the Catholic Association (and if he had been friendly to concession, this is the course which he would have recommended); first, he repeated, to put down the Association, and ascertain the effect of that measure before parliament was called upon to pass such a bill as that upon the table. But it had been said, that, although the present deplorable state of Ireland, organised and disorganised as it had been represented to be, was to be chiefly imputed to the Roman Catholic Association, the House of Commons would not consent to its suppression unless it were accompanied with the measure of concession. This was incredible; it was, indeed, an opprobrious imputation on that branch of the legislature to suppose, that, having passed a bill four years ago for the suppression of that Association, and having found that it had not answered its purpose, they would not now consent to take a step to render that purpose effectual, and thus rescue their country from the continued and aggravated

dangers produced by that Association, except upon the condition that their consent was to be purchased by concession.

"But the real point at issue was this: his Majesty's government were of opinion that the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders was necessary; and they were also of opinion that this point could not be attained, unless accompanied by concession: and, on the other hand, the former advocates of concession would not agree to disfranchisement without it. He differed from both these parties. He thought that disfranchisement, highly important and desirable as it was, would be far too dearly purchased by concession. With the dangerous consequences of the measures of 1793, his mind had been long and deeply impressed. He had received that impression whilst the measure was under discussion in the Irish parliament, from the speeches of many able and eminent men, and particularly from those of the late Earl of Clare and of Mr. Foster, then speaker of the Irish House of Commons. They had too justly predicted its fatal and inevitable consequences. Mr. Burke, with whom it originated, had benevolently supposed that it would have the effect of raising a large proportion of the lower orders in Ireland in the scale of the community; that they would have the power of volition in the exercise of their franchise; and that having favours to bestow and rights to exercise, they would become objects of attention and consideration. But these hopes proved delusive; landed proprietors soon began to parcel out their lands into small freeholds, as they were called, and thus they expected to increase their provincial and political importance. For a time they possessed absolute and uncontrolled authority over the franchises of those who held these freeholds; but the priest at length stepped in, and then that authority was instantly cancelled; the promise to the landlord, with the probability and even the certainty of ejectment, (an easy process, considering the wretched poverty of these nominal freeholders,) was superseded; it became a 'conflict between God and man' (as appeared in evidence before the committees of the two Houses of Parliament in 1825); 'between their eternal and temporal interests;' and the priests thus became masters of the elective franchises of an immense

proportion of the population of Ireland. But were those, who till the present time were opposed to concession, insensible to, or regardless of these consequences, the inevitable certainty of which constituted the main ground of the *necessity* of the legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland? or do they now mean to say that they were resolved to resist concession till these consequences had been produced; but that when produced, as they have been, they would then change their course and accede to a measure of unlimited concession? This was a dilemma, but it appeared to him to be one to which such persons were obviously brought.

"But we are told that 'we cannot stop where we are;' to which he would reply in the words used on a former occasion by the right hon. gentleman who brought forward this measure in the House of Commons, 'we are more likely to stop where we are, than to stop where we shall be, if we advance to the point to which we are invited.' Something, we are perpetually told, must be done; to which he would reply, that nothing is preferable to that something now recommended. But he was decidedly of opinion that something and much might be done; and much had been done already, though the beneficial effects of what had been done had been cramped and kept under by agitators; by the Catholic Association; and by other causes to which he would not now advert. Much had been done during the administration of the noble lords the Earl of Talbot and the Marquess of Wellesley, when lords lieutenant; the bill, denominated the Peace-preserving Bill, the constabulary force, the appointment of assistant barristers, the regulation of fees in the higher courts of justice, the improvement of the magistracy, and in the authority of grand juries, the frequent and public administration of justice at the petty sessions, and the important measure of the commutation of tithes, had all been adopted in the course of a very few years. Much, however, remained to be done, and much will be done, if we mean to apply measures really remedial to the actual evils of Ireland; those evils are poverty, ignorance, and bigotry, and it is from those evils that the country requires emancipation.

"His Lordship then enumerated the poverty, want of edu-

cation, and involuntary idleness of the Irish peasant, the denial of the countenance and example of a resident landlord, the absence of all provision in sickness, accident, misfortune, or old age; and a distrust, founded on these causes, in the due administration of the laws, as amongst the reasons why he is the ready tool of rebellion, and so reckless of the preservation of a life without charms and without comforts. To remedy these evils, the removal of the chief obstacles to the residence of the principal landowners on their property, was indispensably requisite; but in very many parts of Ireland this could not be expected, or effected, without laws fully sufficient to insure protection to their property, their families, and themselves; and what can be the efficiency of laws unless it be secured by an able, upright, and firm administration of them? For this purpose an intelligent and independent magistracy is necessary; and the best hopes of providing a magistracy of this description would be found in a Lord Lieutenant in every county in Ireland, as in England and Scotland, who would be responsible for the selection, and, in a great degree, for the conduct of magistrates in the county of which he had the charge. Of the beneficial effects arising from the existence of such an authority in every county of Great Britain, he had long had the most ample and satisfactory experience: but the inducements to the higher orders to reside on their property would be imperfect without the removal of the principal inducements of the lower to disorder and rapine, the sure forerunners of sedition and rebellion. Of these, poverty, hopeless poverty, is the primary cause; and till the benevolence and wisdom of the laws shall have provided the means of subsistence for those who cannot derive them from their own labour, or from the produce of their own narrow spot of ground, there can be no security whatever for life and property, and no tranquillity in Ireland. As to the present measure, however advisable it may be deemed by some, from other considerations, Lord Sidmouth contended that it bore no relation whatever to the wretched condition of the great mass of the Irish population. It was not a remedial measure. It would not give bread to the hungry, nor education to the ignorant; but let the attention of

government and parliament continue to be directed to the internal state of Ireland, and, at no distant period, security and confidence being established, British capital will be fearlessly applied to call forth its abundant and invaluable resources; and, as the population advance from poverty and ignorance, the hold of bigotry will be loosened, and a fair prospect opened to that unhappy country, for which prosperity and tranquillity must, he feared, be looked for in vain from the measure now under their Lordships' immediate consideration. To all measures of a similar tendency he had constantly given a decided, but, he trusted, not an intemperate opposition; an opposition always painful to himself; for it was impossible for any one who had a spark of generosity in his heart, not to be desirous that all his fellow-subjects should participate in the privileges which he himself enjoyed. But his opinion remained unmoved; he saw no sufficient grounds *for*, but he saw some additional ones *against*, any change in the course which their Lordships had hitherto pursued. It had been observed by Mr. Burke, in reference to the question before us, 'that a concession, in which the governing power of our country loses its dignity, is dearly bought even by him who attains his object. All the people have a deep interest in the dignity of parliament.' In addition to this great authority, he would venture to express his own conviction, that tranquillity has never yet been produced, and is never likely to be produced, by extorted concession." Lord Sidmouth concluded by saying, "that he would not be a party in consigning the great interests of his country into the hands of those who were not masters of their own consciences, their own opinions, and their own conduct; and who were hostile, sincerely and conscientiously hostile, he admitted, to the welfare and existence of that Church establishment which is indissolubly interwoven with the welfare and existence of the state; and he would not consent to purchase a temporary and precarious tranquillity by a permanent and irremediable change in the Protestant constitution of the kingdom.

"Many other considerations pressed upon his mind; but he would trespass no longer upon the indulgence of their Lord-

ships, than whilst he read from a pamphlet, published in 1805, a passage which expressed his own sentiments in language far better than that in which they could be expressed by himself: — 'Let us never forget, that our wise ancestors (even without the awful example of the French Revolution before their eyes) were cautious how they tried innovations in government; let us keep in mind, that they never indulged the theoretical hope of gaining over a discontented party in the state, by timidly yielding to their claims; and never were guilty of the weakness of disgusting their tried supporters by hazardous experiments to conciliate their opponents; but by manfully meeting the dangers with which they were constantly surrounded, they secured the confidence of their friends, and extorted the respect even of their adversaries. If, in the inscrutable decrees of Providence, it be ordained that the venerable fabric of the constitution which our ancestors have raised must at length fall, let us, at least, have the consolation to reflect, that we ourselves have not, by shaking the pillars, accelerated its destruction.'" He added, "that he should give his vote *against* the motion that the bill be now read a second time, and *for* the amendment proposed by the most reverend prelate, that it be read a second time on this day six months."

THE END.

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